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Panda bashing?**
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北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY



Buyers of Beijing

The city's fashion atmosphere has exploded in the past three years, and a flood of new independent fashion buyers are setting the trends with their carefully selected offerings. Their stores offer a sample of the city's current taste in threads.

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Pages 12-13 Dust to drawings

Artist Su Zhiguang's new exhibit uses dust from the streets of Chaoyang District to create pictures that symbolize the drifting nature of earthly life.



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Fields of gold

Why go to South China to find fields of gold? The cole flowers are already blooming in rural Beijing.

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Designer branches out

(Na) too designer Zhang Na is banking on the good taste of China's online shoppers with Fakenatoo, her new sub-brand sold only on Taobao.



Blind actors show strength on stage

By Xinji Letu

A new blind drama troupe is showing Beijing that its visually challenged residents are capable of far more than a lifelong career as masseurs.

Last week, the all-Beijing troupe presented its new interpretation of *La Princesse Maleine* (*Princess Maleine*), a classic French play, at Nine Theater and the Central Academy of Drama Theater as part of Croisements, a Sino-Franco cultural festival.

The two-hour play was directed by Jean-Christophe Blondel, a French director inspired by Lin Zhaoxue's 2008 production of *The Blind*, in which all the actors were visually impaired.

"Blindness is one of the themes of *Princess Maleine*, so it's interesting to see blind people play it," Blondel said.

But preparing a blind cast to give an amazing performance was no easy task.

Blondel first came to China to hear auditions from 60 candidates, many of whom had no the-

ater experience. His final cast of eight actors, all between the ages of 19 and 68, began rehearsing last August with the aid of four sighted professional actors.

"Our every move on stage was guided by the professional actors," said Wang Juan, one of the blind performers.

"There were no shortcuts – just continual practice and repetition," said Liu Yujia, another performer, after the show. "Our rehearsals took five to six times as long as sighted actors."

Despite the difficulty, the play has been a success. The blind actors wear specially-made, suit-like costumes on stage and play almost all the leading roles, including the king, the princess and the prince.

"The French director gave us a lot of room for improvisation, which is something we don't usually get from Chinese directors," said Zhang Feng, one of the actors.

Blondel said the cooperation was a way to help the blind actors learn more about the

sighted world and to bring a bit of their unique imagination to the stage.

For blind performers, the play has a deeper meaning – it was a day to fulfill their desire for social involvement.

Shang Zhenbing, who worked with Lin in *The Blind*, said that visually impaired people in China have long been closed off from the outside world.

"Theater has opened another window for us to 'see' a fresh new sight," he said.

Teng Weimin, another blind actor, used to be a doctor before he lost his sight. "[Since then], my life has undergone tremendous change. But my pursuit of art has not diminished," he said.

The show was praised by viewers, many of whom said the French play took on a new meaning due to the actors' persistence and dedication despite disability.

"It was amazing. I could barely tell who was blind on the stage," one viewer said during a question and answer session that followed



Blind actors at rehearsal

Photo by Xu Ge

the performance.

Blondel said that was planned all along, and that the play was about blurring the line separating the blind and the sighted.

"We have a shared dream: to build a platform through which visually impaired people can step out and fight for their

right to participate in society on equal footing," said Li Xuemei, one of the eldest performers in the troupe.

With its Beijing tour complete, the troupe is moving on to stage performances in Nanjing, Shanghai and Ningbo during the next several weeks.

Honor guards celebrate with city's children



By Li Zhixing

More than 300 migrant students from Beijing Pingguoyuan Primary School and Beijing Zhixing Primary School celebrate International Children's Day at a military camp on West Fourth Ring Road.

The children were invited by Beijing Garrison and the Beijing Youth League to watch the city's honor guard march, to train alongside the young soldiers and learn more about the guards before making a trip to their dormitories.

National Museum scorned for hosting LV exhibit

By Han Manman

With Tsinghua University reeling from criticism of its decision to slap a commercial brand on one of its buildings, The National Museum of China is finding itself in similar hot water.

French luxury giant Louis Vuitton recently unveiled "Voyages," a three-month exhibition, starting August 30 at the museum to celebrate its 20th anniversary on the mainland.

The exhibition features historical luggage and handbags and is the first commercial exhibition in the museum's history and its first since renovations began four years ago.

Yves Carcelle, president and CEO of Louis Vuitton Malletier, said at Monday's press conference that the 4,000-square-meter exhibition was pricey, but that money was not the issue.

"What's important is what you are going to discover. I think before money, there's the 157 years history of creativity and craftsmanship," he said.

Visitors have decried the museum's "excess commercialization" since the exhibition opened its doors.

Many netizens said luxury brands had no place in the same building as cultural treasures and said the museum should be a dignified institution that is above pursuing quick profits.

"I strongly disagree [with the national museum's choice]," said Zhang Tinghao, former director of the Chinese Cultural Heritage Research Institute. "LV is a luxury and commercial brand and does

not deserve a seat next to a national art exhibition."

"China has a long history and a great number of cultural relics to exhibit, but the museum selected a purely commercial venture as its first special exhibit," Zhang said.

Chen Lusheng, vice director of the museum, said he understands the criticism.

But compared with 157-year-old Louis Vuitton, Chen said the 100-year-old national museum is still young.

He said the museum had set up strict criteria on selecting a brand to exhibit – insisting on both historic and artistic value.

"Louis Vuitton had many original designs that have affected the history of travel and represented art and emotions. We hope the exhibition can 'enlighten' visitors from China's cultural and creative industries," he said.

Chen was supported by Wang Boqiao, a curator.

Wang told China News Service that Louis Vuitton is not the first luxury brand to be displayed in a national museum. He said Cartier has had its collections displayed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and The British Museum.

Wang said the China national museum is often perceived as being too serious and that such an exhibition could help it achieve a fashionable image. However, he said it was a little early for the newly opened museum to be bringing in exhibitions of commercial brands.

Gold or garbage?

Online writing boom plagued by bad reputation

By Huang Daohen

Ninety-nine-point-nine percent of writing on the Internet is crap, according to one famed Chinese writer.

But while ink-and-paper authors whinge about the skills of their digital counterparts, the Web is fast emerging as an attractive platform for readers, writers and publishers.

The news of a possible initial public offering by top online literature site Cloudary Corp, a subsidiary of the Nasdaq-listed Shanda, rallied even more support of Web literature.

But can Web writers shake off their reputation as people who couldn't hack it in the world of print literature? And how do they hope to turn their hobby into a full-time career?



The Internet is increasingly being seen as a tool for literary empowerment, analysts say.

Zhang Yong/CFP Photo

Dreams go online

"I like online literature. It is more convenient and environmentally friendly," said Yang Sheng, 29, an English teacher at a local language training school.

During the Wednesday morning rush hour, Yang mechanically switches on his newly bought iPad as the subway train's door closes. Today he is starting the third chapter of *Leave Me Alone*, Murong Xuecun's debut novel.

With a one-and-a-half-hour journey to work, reading is the best way to kill time.

But if it weren't for the Web, Murong would still be a car salesman in Chengdu, Sichuan Province.

Today, the 37-year-old is one of the nation's best-known authors. His works, focusing on sex, love, gambling and drugs, have been read by millions and translated into German, French and English.

Murong first began writing his urban tales on the Web in 2001. His success may explain the sudden enthusiasm for online literature.

But Yang is not merely Murong's fan: he is also a contracted writer for Qidian.com, one of the country's top online publishers.

The 29-year-old looks like a typical southerner: he is of average height and has soft features and a soft voice. Dressed casually and wearing sports shoes, Yang is the author of three collections of short stories and essays.

He published his first collection of short stories, *Successful Loser*, in 2004, while he was a college student in Shanghai. The debut work brought him fame, but not money, because



Murong Xuecun is an example of literary fame won online.

CFP Photo

he spent all his money getting the work published.

After graduation, Yang decided to work for a Shanghai media company. "I'd long been told that it is tough to be a writer, so I got a job," he said.

By 2009, he quit his job despite its monetary perks. "Something was missing. My nature is that I'm interested in other people, talking to and writing about people," Yang said.

He packed his bags and moved to the capital, which he describes as the city of culture. Soon, Yang became a contracted writer so he could save money and publish his work.

Struggling writers

Though writing online may seem attractive for those who dream of fame, very few find recognition.

Most online writers still hold

"Money is not what I am writing for. I like to exchange ideas on the Internet. I can always find an audience there."

a day job, adding to their stories only at night.

Duan Lingxuan, a Web writer for the rival publisher Rongshu.com, works in the computer center of her local university.

"There is not much work, and it is boring. Students come in and out every day. But the facility access is convenient," she said.

Becoming a regular, contracted writer for Qidian or Rongshu is not easy. Like Yang, one needs to have a literary background and several published works.

But that is no guarantee of regular or adequate payment.

Yang, for instance, earned 5,000 yuan a month during his first year. Now he earns 8,000 yuan a month, but has to write 5,000 characters per day – average output for a contracted online writer.

But Yang represents only part of the industry. Writers like Duan work only because they love it.

Yang said there are a few writers churning out more than 10,000 words a day. If their life is depending on this, it can be very difficult and boring, Yang said.

Duan is, nevertheless, happy. "Money is not what I am writing for," she said. "I like to exchange ideas on the Internet. I can always

find an audience there."

Currently, online literature websites are testing two business models. One splits profits with the authors, and the other pays a flat contracted rate: the site claims the author's copyright to publish e-books.

Garbage the norm

Many writers dream that their Web writing will pave the way for them to become rich and famous authors.

But many of them lack very basic writing skills, said Chen Jun, an editor at Qidian.

The Internet makes publishing easy – too easy, perhaps. The more people who choose to get their hands in it, the faster the quality of online writing is spiraling downward.

Chen said much of the literature available on the Web is hollow – so hollow it hurts to read and hurts more to edit. Qidian receives thousands of articles daily: on a good day, one third of these will be published.

Editors are turning into webmasters responsible for controlling the flow and routing garbage and gold into the appropriate piles.

Chen said the quality problem became more pronounced during the First National Inter-

net Literature Contest, which kicked off in March.

The contest, held by NetEase and Qidian, aimed to promote an appreciation of literature and encourage creative writing. The top prizewinner would take home 100,000 yuan and a publishing contract.

"But it is sifting sand for flecks of gold," Chen said. "There are talented writers hidden on the Web, but it is damn hard to find them."

Chen said Mai Jia's criticism of Internet literature as rubbish came as no shock.

Mai told a forum last April that 99.99 percent of writing on the Internet is crap. "If it were within my power, I would obliterate all Internet literature," he said.

Though Mai's comments were spun as a boy from the old crowd trying to keep down up-and-coming authors, Chen said the hostility was understandable – though he admits it is hard to direct people's reading habits.

"The Internet is a big revolution. Online writing tends to be suitable for recreation and fast reading," he said.

"If you write something on the Internet and someone reads it, you can cause things to change," he said.

And that's powerful.

48-Hour Film Project succeeds in third year

By Annie Wei

Last Saturday and Sunday the basement of Workers Gymnasium was full of laughs as producers presented their submissions to the third 48-Hour Film Project.

Global project

This year was long-time film producer Cecilile Yui's first encounter with the 48-Hour Film Project, a mini film festival first created in 2001 in Washington DC that has since gone global, with projects popping up in new cities each year.

2011 saw the festival spread to the Chinese cities of Shanghai and Kaohsiun, Taiwan.

"Some of the films are pretty good. These young filmmakers have surprising ideas," Yu said after the screenings.

Among her favorites were *Cut*, a horror film with an intense atmosphere, and *Xiaodeng and His Friends*, a black humor short with a surprising plot.

Per the project's conditions, each film team was given a character, a prop, a genre and a line of dialogue to include in each film at 6:30 pm on Friday. The teams had until 7:30 pm Sunday to write, cast, shoot, edit and submit a 4- to 7-minute short.

This year's Beijing competition required incorporating a character, a teacher named Tao Yang, a pill as a prop and a line of dialogue that said, "What am I supposed to do?"

Aiming local

The first Beijing 48-Hour Film Project in 2009 drew 13 teams; this year's drew 28.

"More than 80 of the participants were locals," said Selim Oulmekki, the French organizer of the project's Beijing incarnation.

"In the past, a lot of people looked at the 48-Hour Film Project as an event for expats. The people who didn't speak English had a hard time getting the information needed to attend," Oulmekki said.

"I wanted to change that."

This year, his team launched an official Chinese version for local participants. His team also distributed posters at the city's three major film schools and began posting information about the event on Douban.

Among the 28 teams, six failed to submit their productions in time.

Two teams gave up, citing editing difficulties. A team led by Peter Sallade, the producer for the city's first and second 48-Hour Film Projects, was declared ineligible until next year. One other team was disqualified for not submitting their project with subtitles.

Fun experience

Moxie Peng, a 23-year-old man from Changsha, Hunan Province, found out about the project one hour before the application deadline.

Peng said his first challenge was to come up with the 500-yuan entry fee. Second, he had to find two women who were willing to act for free, including sharing an intimate kiss on camera and performing in a bathtub scene. Peng also had to dump another 1,500



Team Taineng Chuanmei prepares their final cut



Team Laowai Films in discussion

Few venues are willing to screen indie films, leaving up and coming directors left out of the limelight. As a result, investors always have to turn to Hong Kong to woo known directors like Andrew Liu and Siu Fai Mak.



Team Laowai Films shot most of its footage in a local neighborhood.



Films had a 7:30 pm deadline.



Team Relimao shooting their entry



Team BM



Team 1609

Photos provided by 107cine.com

yuan on taxi fares.

"I think it was challenging and gave me a good chance to learn from more experienced filmmakers," he said.

Peng's story *Gone* was a 7-minute love triangle that broke conventional barriers between nationality, race and love.

Vivi Lim, a TV employee, performed as one of the actresses.

"At first, Peng asked a colleague of mine to join but she

was too busy to make it," Lim said. Lim agreed to help, saying she has always been interested in performing.

"It only took half a day and we only shot one or two tapes," Lim said.

For Lim, it was fun experience and opened up more possibilities. "After screening, quite a few directors came to me and praised my acting," she said.

For Jay Hubert, a 28-year-

old from US, this year was his third time submitting a project as part of team Laowai Films. Hubert called on other friends to join the competition, but when they found they had no time left to organize their own teams, they opted to join his.

"This year, my team had more than 20 people," he said. He shot locals to save on taxi fares, but had to spend most of his 1,000-yuan budget on food for the crew.

Hubert praised the project for giving Beijing's aspiring filmmakers a chance to create their own films. "When I was in school in Hawaii, we had an independent film event almost every month," he said.

A source of talent

Although independent films are an important supplement to mainstream movies – especially in terms of talent and creativity – it is very hard to be an independent filmmaker on the Chinese mainland, said Yu Sen-lun, a film industry researcher.

"There is basically no funding to support them. Only the commercial film industry is well developed," she said.

Most local independent filmmakers have to seek money from abroad to fund their productions and submit them to overseas film festivals. But as industry outsiders, they are perpetually underground.

Few venues are willing to screen indie films, leaving up-and-coming directors left out of the limelight. "As a result, investors always have to turn to Hong Kong to woo known directors like Andrew Liu and Siu Fai Mak," Yu said.

Yu contrasted China's situation with the US, which has a comparatively balanced indie scene where filmmakers have a chance to make commercial films even without the backing of Hollywood.

A good start

"I think the trend for independent films is just beginning," said Oulmekki, the project's Beijing producer.

This year's new festival in Kaohsiung, for example, drew 50 teams.

For many aspiring directors, what keeps them from achieving their film dreams is a lack of time.

The 48-Hour Film Project removes that obstacle, by putting everyone on equal footing and giving them only a weekend to complete their submission.

Next year, Oulmekki hopes to improve some of the rules: first on the list will be requiring subtitles.

Oulmekki said that the audience in China is very mixed, and having subtitles is essential to making the submissions accessible to all viewers. To be fair to local filmmakers, Oulmekki said the subtitles would be given a separate deadline. Participants would have up to five days after the final deadline to submit subtitles for their film.

"I hope the 48-hour Film Project can help boost independent film-making and become a key event for local independent filmmakers," Oulmekki said.

The results of the 48 Hours Film Project will be announced at Yugong Yishan at 8 pm on June 22, and the best 10 films will be screened.

Will you come to China, young scientists?

Talented people are the most precious resource for companies in 21st century. But when a country fails to attract talent, can it stay competitive?

A recent article in the *Washington Post* centered on the US' talent crisis: young American scientists are heading to China, Singapore, Brazil, or the Middle East because they can't get funding at home.

Matthew Stremalau, graduate of Haverford College and Harvard University, said young American scientists should go to emerging countries like China, as US public funding for science and technology is shrinking.

Twenty years ago, most molecular-science PhD graduates in the US went on to start up their own labs at universities across the country.

"Today, however, only a handful of my friends will go on to run their own labs, though more would like to. Some go into industry or consulting or law. Others leave science altogether," he said.

Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, said that for every six grant applications the agency receives, "five of them are going to go begging." Will this tough funding environment force American scientists to start looking for jobs in other countries? If they do, there won't be any shortage of options, he said.

Stremalau said the global science landscape is radically different from what it was when he started graduate school 10 years ago. "Opportunities for cutting-edge science are sprouting in many other countries. China stands out."

"There, emerging powers have a voracious appetite for good scientists. So they're trying to poach ours," he said. (Agencies)



Professor Shi Yigong, who walked away from a top research position in the US, has become the dean of life sciences at Tsinghua University.
Frederic Brown/IC Photo

The third eye China is still lagging behind in talent war

By Li Zhixin

Although China has made great progress in scientific research and education, a publicly known fact is that China is still a net exporter when it comes to talent.

Among Chinese students who earned a science and engineering doctoral degree in the US in 2002, 92 percent of them were still living and working in the US five years later. Even if the proportion of Chinese students returning to their homeland is rising, the number is still below 40 percent. In this sense, China is losing the war to keep talent.

In addition, though China began granting long-term residence in 2004, foreign talents have no way to obtain Chinese citizenship.

The reason the US can attract much of the world's top talents is due to the country paying great attention to talents and incorporating

them into its long-term national strategy.

First, in the education industry, the US has established some of the most famous universities and colleges – American universities occupy more than half of the world's Top 40 – and has been attracting outstanding young people throughout the world for a long time. More than a third of science and engineering doctorate degrees goes to international students.

Second, the US Labor or Immigration Department helps these talents obtain green cards and eventually become US citizens. The US accepts 140,000 professional immigrants each year.

And finally, other government departments and all of society then provide them platforms so that they maximize their ability. Forty-seven percent of the scientists and engineers in the US and more than 25 percent of the founders

of American engineering and high-tech companies are immigrants.

These talents created more than 450,000 employment opportunities in 2005, valued at 52 billion yuan.

US policies in education, immigration and science are still among the most open and far-reaching in the world.

Many countries including Singapore, Australia and Canada and newly emerging countries are copying the US model.

More and more countries are realizing that they must give a lot to gain foreign technology and intellectual property, but it might be totally free to attract these scientific and technological talents to build from the ground up.

— Wang Huiyao,
director of the Center for China and Globalization, also the author of *Talents War*

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Prada prepares to go public in Hong Kong

By Chu Meng

Prada, the fashion guru and pride of Italian luxury, has decided to issue shares in the Hong Kong market. The Asian market, especially China, is one of the most attractive territories for global luxury brands both for its huge consumers purchasing power and its seductive financial investment resources. But why Hong Kong, and who is picking up the bill?



Chinese shoppers shop Prada's boutique in Plaza 66 shopping mall, Shanghai. Wen Lei/IC Photo

Prada has just won approval from Hong Kong Stock Exchange's listing committee for an initial public offering (IPO) of HK \$15 billion (12.5 billion yuan), scheduled for early next week, according to an announcement published on its official website last weekend.

The listing in Hong Kong is the first time an Italian luxury brand has staked so much on the China market.

Analysts estimated that its globally synchronized fashions and shares would be available to local consumers and institutional investors by mid-July.

An attractive market

Established in 1913, the third generation inheritor and designer Miuccia Prada, together with her husband and CEO of the family-owned group Patrizio Bertelli, hold 95 percent of the shares in their company. The remaining 5 percent were sold to the Bank of Italy United Sao Paulo in 2006.

But that's changing.

In January, Bloomberg reported that luxury good sales in China are expected to grow one quarter this year. Prada sales jumped 63 percent in Asian countries last year, setting the company up for 31 percent growth worldwide.

"Listing in Hong Kong will allow Prada to better target its shares to powerful investors in the middle of the fastest-growing luxury market in the world," said Xiao Chen, a professor from the Peking University School of Economics.

China is a hotbed for global luxury

"Listing in Hong Kong will allow Prada to better target its shares to powerful investors in the middle of the fastest-growing luxury market in the world."

brands. Tiffany & Co, Hermes and Louis Vuitton have already opened flagship stores on the mainland.

Xiao said a recent report on the Chinese economy estimated that China will account for more than one fifth of the global luxury market by the year 2015, with estimated net sales of \$27 billion (175 billion yuan).

"Chinese individuals' purchasing power has repeatedly beaten the expectations of luxury sales crews. Their obsession is only increasing as they can afford more luxury goods. It's much like Japan in the 1990s," Xiao said.

"Choosing to list on the Hong Kong stock market indicates the brand has its eyes on the local consumer."

Escaping debt

But these figures alone paint too rosy a picture for Prada.

Its first quarter financial report showed Prada is carrying a debt of more than \$5.7 billion (37 billion yuan), and money borrowed from the Asian market may be its quickest means of escape, Xiao said.

"It will only see new profits after having a successful listing and raising enough

money in Hong Kong to pay off its huge debts. How it will perform in the stock market after this remains unclear," Xiao said.

There is reason to be nervous, because the Asian market was never Prada's first choice for where to go public.

The company originally planned to begin selling shares in Italy on September 18, 2001. However, due to the September 11 terrorist attack on the US one week prior, world stock markets crashed and luxury sales slumped. Prada's planned IPO went on a permanent hiatus.

In 2002, Prada attempted to push back for another chance. That time, it was a scandal at the WorldCom agency that forced it to postpone its IPO.

It tried again six years later, but the 2008 global financial crisis smashed all companies' plans to go public that year.

Avoiding risks

As a free investment hub in Asia, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange is in a special position.

Numerous luxury manufacturers, such as American brands Samsonite and Coach, French L'Occitane and British Jimmy Choo, have also been courting Asian growth by announcing plans to sell shares on the Hong Kong market.

"In order to ensure its fifth attempt is a success, Prada has to choose a market that meets three requirements: it has to have a safe and prosperous economic environment, minimal risk and maximal financing potential," Xiao said.

"The Asian market meets all three."

Financial planning booms despite obstacles

By Huang Daoheng

What does it mean to be a financial planner in China, and how can the country's economy maintain its double-digit economic growth?

A delegation of 44 American financial planners from the country's Financial Planning Association (FPA) met to answer such questions at the Annual Conference for Financial Planners held in Beijing last Thursday.

China has surprised many in the US by demonstrating that financial planning is already a thriving profession here, said Dannel Moisan, former FPA president, in his address to last Thursday's forum.

Great wealth is being created for China's citizens and global investors in the world's second largest economy. Moisan said that's the reason planners in the US need to talk face-to-face with their Chinese colleagues.

The group intends to exchange experiences and strategies, he said.

Currently, China grants four financial planning certifications: Certified Financial Planner (CFP), Associate Financial Planner (AFP), Executive Financial Planner (EFP) and Certified Private Banker (CPB).

As of March 31, there were 68,023 AFPs, 10,232 CFPs, 2,244 EFPs and 159 CPBs in China, according to Financial Planning Standards Board (FPSB) China, the host of the conference.

Liu Feng, chairman of FPSB China, believes the number will increase due to increasing market demand.

FPSB China has conducted initial training and educational programs for these certifications, and several universities are setting up degree programs in financial planning as its popularity grows.

Richard Salmen, former FPA president, said though China has seen solid progress in financial planning, there is also much work that has to be done.

Salmen said he was impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of young Chinese financial planners who had come from all over the country to attend the forum. "I found myself thinking back to when I started as a financial planner at the age of 29," he said.

The average age of a CFP certificate holder in China is 32 while equivalent certificate holders with the American FPA are in their mid-50s.

Salmen said a major problem in China that needs to be changed is how Chinese consumers look at the value of financial planning.

Most rich Chinese view financial planning as a way to gain more wealth through investments, while American clients see financial planning more broadly, Salmen said.

But while the Chinese model may be different, Salmen said the process is the same - to help families achieve their financial goals.

The two-day conference also included small discussions with Chinese financial planners, a financial planning symposium attended by nearly 300 financial planners and talks with university students and private banking groups.

Free porridge program still underappreciated

By Wei Xi

There's an old saying that "there's no such thing as a free lunch." But in recent years, several groups of volunteers have been defying this adage by issuing free porridge to passersby.

These groups belong to Beijing Ren Ai Charity Foundation, which was founded in 2006, with the free-porridge program starting three years ago.

In the beginning, only one group provided community residents free porridge, but this service has been extended to places such as Chaowai SOHO and Tsinghua Science and Technology Park.

"We offer free porridge mainly to office workers who do not have time to make themselves breakfast on weekdays," said Zhong Hongxia, head of Tsinghua Xinzhan group. "But we also provide porridge to trash collectors, vagrants or anyone in need."

Zhong said the purpose of the program is to pass the feeling of caring to people and encourage them to care for others.

All Xinzhan members are volunteers. Some are as young as 10, while others are as old as 80. They come from all sectors of society: they comprise students, teachers, office workers, media and the retired.

"Anyone who wants to join us can be a volunteer," Zhong said. "Just as our principles say, everyone has the right to do this and enjoy charity."

Volunteers begin preparing the porridge at 3 am, and at 8 am, a group of 10 to 20 uniformed volunteers go to their designated spots with a three-wheel vehicle and distribute the food in plastic cups.

The volunteers bow to passersby, hand the cups over with two hands in the traditionally polite style and always say, "Have a nice day."

Sixty-eight year old Liu Aizhen and 72-year-old Chen Aizi are retired couple living near Tsinghua Science and Technology Park. Liu had been a volunteer for almost a year, and her husband Chen for two months.

Liu said as long as they are not ill, she and her husband will come, rain or shine. Liu also said she is happy bowing to younger people because "it shows the equality between human beings."

"It was the first time I had the porridge, and it did warm me," said a construction worker surnamed Zhou.

A local resident surnamed Qin said she and her granddaughter are consistently offered the porridge.

"Sometimes, when my granddaughter doesn't see them, she would ask me where they've gone," Qin said. "The volunteers speak so gently and soft that it makes me feel good."

However, not every passerby accepts the porridge. Some walk away without acknowledging the volunteers, and some even doubt about whether the food really is free.

One local female resident surnamed Zhang, who declined to give her full name, said she has never accepted the offering.

"I never eat outside. I don't think they are clean enough," she said.

Ami Burk, an English teacher at New Oriental School, said when she accepted the porridge, she thought the volunteers were promoting a new restaurant.

A year after the program was set up, Sohu ran an online survey asking whether people would accept the porridge. Out of 1,270 respondents, 57 percent said they would not, either because they didn't need it, because they didn't think it was clean enough or because they thought there was a catch. Another 9.7 percent said they were unsure.



Volunteers provide community residents free porridge, but not every one wants to take it.
Photo provided by Beijing Ren Ai Charity Foundation

Comment

Focus on more charitable undertakings

If I encounter someone offering me porridge on my way to work, I will definitely refuse. Free food should be given to those who are hungry and unable to feed themselves. Why don't they focus more on real charity, since it is a charity foundation? Offering free porridge on the streets makes me feel like they are promoting their organization.

— Bao Jiamu, professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University

An old tradition

Chinese people have long had the tradition of offering free porridge to the poor. Of course, nowadays most people are out of poverty, but the tradition of offering free porridge is still a way of showing care for others. Besides, young people are the future of the nation, and offering them breakfast can make them more energetic in the workplace.

— Guo Shirui, retiree, Beijing

Not degrading to accept free lunch

Many think only the poor and the disadvantaged need charity, and that accepting the porridge degrades us. But as a matter of fact, everyone needs to be shown care from others in one way or another.

— Cai Guolin, shop owner

Depends on how the volunteers behave

I'm not sure whether I'd accept the free porridge; it depends on how the volunteers look and the way they offer it. I think if the volunteers behave in a proper way, most people will accept the offering. Yet the activity itself is good, and it is what we should praise and promote in today's world.

— Yang Yang, graduate student at Peking University

The return of Kung Fu Panda revives debates

By Yao Weijie

Sweet and clumsy Po, accompanied by his kung fu friends, is creating a stir once again. The opening of *Kung Fu Panda 2* drew 40 million yuan, but its reception wasn't all positive.

Artist Zhao Bandi said the movie represented a cultural invasion from the US. His opinion drew the support of Kong Qingdong, a professor who said Hollywood has taken Chinese symbols and "conquered" China with them.

"Hollywood not only wants your money, but it wants to brainwash you," he said.

An American named Tim Lies, who used to work in Hollywood, boycotted the movie.



Many are upset that clumsy Po wasn't Made-in-China. CFP Photo

He held a wooden sign with the words "Suggest Chinese people not see *Kung Fu Panda 2*" on the street, then uploaded the video on the Internet.

Are Chinese people really upset about Hollywood using Chinese elements to make a buck?

"Compared with the first film, *Kung Fu Panda 2* included more Chinese elements," said Liang Peng, a big fan of *Kung Fu Panda*. To name a few: shadow play, dandan noodles, Sichuan hotpot and tai chi.

"Although it's a movie that's unapologetically capitalizing on its Chinese elements, I still love it," Liang said.

The source of some people's aversion to *Kung Fu Panda 2* may be an attempt to compensate for disappointment with domestic filmmakers. Wednesday was International Children's Day, yet Chinese cinemas weren't

able to show one decent domestic movie made for children. It's no wonder that the vast majority of the public is willing to embrace *Kung Fu Panda 2*.

Some scholars have said that China lacks not technology but imagination. Directors from developed countries also take the long view: the production cycle can be as long as four to five years.

"Chinese people hope domestic movies can be strong and live up to their expectations, but it's petty to criticize good movies just because the domestic industry is lacking," Liang said. "We shouldn't resist *Kung Fu Panda 2*. Instead, we should learn from it."

Comment

Too excellent

Kung Fu Panda 2 is really good. Don't say sequels are never as good as the original. It's 90 minutes of great action.

— Luo Yonghao, English teacher

They just want your money

Director Steven Spielberg is actually the boss of *Kung Fu Panda 2*. Although he didn't publish anti-China sayings directly, he expressed opinions against the Beijing Olympic Games. When his movie comes

to China to earn money, why should we buy a ticket?

— Liu Shichao, employee at a local medicine company

Don't lock our doors again

It's a question worth considering: why can't we or why don't we make a movie similar to *Kung Fu Panda 2*? The movie is full of tender and warm moments, ideas that are gradually disappearing in our society. Those who believe the film is

about "brainwashing" are an insult to our intelligence. They also completely lack confidence in Chinese films.

We shall never lock our doors again, but absorb anything and everything we can from all over the world.

— Zhang Linlin, editor

Being oversensitive won't help us progress

Some people are oversensitive. They criticize *Kung Fu Panda 2* as non-profes-

sional and say its Chinese elements mislead the audience, especially children. But Chinese culture has been filmed by foreigners for a long time, and has never determined whether a film is successful or not. Being oversensitive hinders progress. I hope when *Mulan 2* comes out, we won't accuse the producers of being amateurs.

— Li Sheng, assistant professor at Nankai University



China Open Tickets On Sale Worldwide

The 2011 China Open will be held at the National Tennis Center from September 25 to October 9. During the event, the brand new Center Court Stadium, complete with a retractable roof will be unveiled. On May 26, tickets to the China Open will officially go on sale worldwide. Various ticket types such as grand-stand, day-pass, package and VIP hospitality are available for tennis fans. Hurry up for the limited special on-sale packages! For more information, please call the China Open hotline or logon www.chinaopen.com.cn

China Open hotline: 400-707-6666

Official China Open website: www.chinaopen.com.cn

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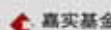
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Italian embassy presents Venice Biennale

By Chu Meng

The 54th Venice Biennale will officially open this Saturday, coinciding with the 150th anniversary of Italian unification. In order to celebrate the holiday, the Italian Pavilion at the biennale, for the first time, will bring exhibitions to 89 Italian cultural institutes around the world.

Assisted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Ministry of National Cultural Heritage Activities Coordination, the Italian Culture Institution under the Italian embassy in Beijing was transformed into the biennale's Beijing Branch Pavilion on Monday.

The branch's curator, Vittorio Sgarbi, said exhibitions and activities will be brought from the biennale to Beijing over a five-month period. Meanwhile, in order to encourage local participation, works by Italian artists working and living in Beijing will be displayed.

"The works that will be shown here in the Italian Culture Institution in Beijing must be done by Italian artists and reflect their understanding of China's or Beijing's cultural uniqueness," Sgarbi said.

One example is Instant Hutong, a project by Italian architect and device artist Marcella Campa, who has been living at Mao'er Hutong for seven years.

Her Urban Carpets project, consisting of eight big canvases embroidered with traditional Chinese patterns and showing Beijing's disappearing hutong, has won the artist worldwide recognition.

She said it was by chance that she got to know the construction style of hutong in Beijing. While living in Milan in 2004, she was curious about the chessboard patterns and gray colors of Beijing's hutong.

"Then I decided to come here to see what exactly they look like and to learn why people love to live in this way," she said.

She was surprised to see that the hutong in the southern part of the city were completely different from what she had read about. They were mostly demolished. Others were in the process of disappearing.

"I wondered why Chinese people so love to tear old houses down – so many and so fast. In Italy, we also have many aged cities and aged houses. Italian people just keep living in them for generation after generation, like in the old town of Roma," she said.

"We love the new, but we don't destroy the old."

Campa's carpets represent different hutong areas among a square-kilometer area in downtown Beijing, where approximately



Italian artists Stefano Avesani and Marcella Campa

Photos provided by Marcella Campa



Hutong of Dongsishitiao area

30,000 people live. Each carpet presents an autonomous town within a big city.

The carpets are embroidered by hand and includes 1970s-style Communist slogans. The carpets have been filled with white wire wool insertions.

Campa said while she was working on drafting a sketch of hutong in certain areas, she could hardly find any maps for reference.

She walked lane by lane and drew maps step by step.

"Many times, part of a hutong disappeared before I could finish," she said, which was why she named her series "Instant Hutong."

Exhibitions and activities at the Beijing Branch Pavilion will last until November 27, the same date as the biennale's closing day in Venice.

Ethiopia celebrates 'Ginbot 20'

By Han Manman

When Ethiopia makes the news, it's usually for the wrong reasons.

The country is trying to change its image as a war-torn, poverty-stricken place, said Seyoum Mesfin, Ethiopia's ambassador to China, at an Ethiopia National Day reception.

Last Saturday was the 20th anniversary of "Ginbot 20," marking the victory of the Ethiopian people over tyranny on May 28, 1991, ushering in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Ambassadors, diplomats and representatives of various African communities in Beijing gathered at the Ethiopian embassy to celebrate the big event. At the celebration, folk troupes from Ethiopia and China presented shows that reflect the diverse cultures of the two countries.

"Twenty years ago, Ethiopia's People's Revolutionary Democratic Front dismantled one of the most cruel regimes of our era, a regime that unleashed a senseless war against the Ethiopian people and committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide," the ambassador said.

He said while development and peace has finally dawned on Ethiopia, the country is still suffering from the national image of famine, poverty and war.

"Changing the image of our country is the major challenge lying ahead for the Ethiopian people and leadership. And poverty is our No. 1 enemy," the ambassador said. "That is why everyone in Ethiopia and its leadership has built a national consensus to fight poverty tooth and nail and to transform the country into a prosperous, democratic and modern nation."

Mesfin said Ethiopia has already progressed on the economic front in recent years. He said the country's economy is among the Top 10 fastest growing economies in the world. Its GDP has been growing at an average rate of 11.5 percent annually for the last seven years.

The ambassador said the relationship with China is very important as the two countries are good partners in many areas, such as in the development of infrastructure, transfer of technology and capacity building in Ethiopia. He said he hopes cooperation and friendship between the two countries will only strengthen in the future.

Mesfin said cooperation in the airline industry has made especially big progress. In early May, Ethiopia launched daily non-stop flight services between Addis Ababa and Beijing with the ultra modern Boeing 777-200LR aircraft, making it the first non-stop service from Africa to China. The country also launched its historic maiden flight to Hangzhou last month – Ethiopian airlines' fourth destination in China, along with Beijing, Guangzhou and Hong Kong.

Visegrad Group seeks more cooperation with China

By Li Zhixin

Last Friday, the Polish, Hungarian, Czech Republic and Slovakian embassies held a gathering to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the creation of the "Visegrad Group."

Known as the V4, the group formed as the result of a February 15, 1991 meeting of heads of state of Czechoslovakia (which became two independent countries in 1993), Hungary and Poland, held in the Hungarian castle town of Visegrad. The group committed to working together in a number of fields.

At the event, ambassadors

from the four embassies introduced the present development situation in their countries and expressed their hope to seek more cooperation with China in the fields of economy, trade, culture, education, tourism, science and non-traditional security, and try to establish V4-China cooperation in the future.

"The four countries have always been part of a single civilization, sharing cultural and intellectual values and common roots in diverse religious traditions. So we hope to further strengthen our cultural cohesion and collectively promote our tourism and cultural

resources in China," said Polish ambassador Tadeusz Chomicz.

Chomicz said the V4 is not an alternative to the all-European integration efforts, nor does it try to compete with the existing functional central European structures. Its activities are in no way aimed at isolating or weakening ties with the other countries. On the contrary, the group aims at encouraging optimum cooperation with all countries, in particular its neighbors.

He said all the activities of the V4 are aimed at strengthening stability in the central European region. The group also wishes

to contribute toward building a stable Europe based on effective, functionally complementary and mutually reinforcing cooperation and coordination within existing European and transatlantic institutions.

The group has not institutionalized and its operation is based solely on the principle of periodic meetings of its representatives at various levels, including prime ministers, heads of states, ministers and experts. Official meetings of prime ministers take place on an annual basis. The presidency is held by rotating V4 countries.

A two-wheel excursion through the city

By Wei Xi

Victoria Pavlova, a Ukrainian woman, and Matteo Trenti, an Italian man, organized the first Bicycle City Quest Championship in Beijing last Sunday.

Seven participants were divided into two teams. They rode their bikes to different places around the city to fulfill various tasks, such as solving puzzles, finding hidden codes and cooperating with strangers on the way. The team that passed all the stages and arrived first at the destination was declared champion.

"The activity is very new to me and full of fun. It was pretty much like being in a movie," said Yuan Ye, 26-year-old Chinese employee at an IT company. "I threw myself totally into the games and enjoyed the process, even though I didn't win."

Yuan said the 100-yuan entry fee was a bit high. "If the price was 50 yuan less, I'd participate again," he said.

The championship was won by an Irish team, which received a cash reward.

"They arrived late, but they found all the solutions to the tasks," Trenti said. "The reward varies according to the number of participants."

Trenti said he and Pavlova spent a few hours designing the tasks, and that the main purpose of the



Beijing's first Bicycle City Quest Championship

Photo provided by Victoria Pavlova and make their dreams come true, and China today is a perfect place to do this," said Pavlova, founder and general manager of Harmony Club. "But unfortunately, many professionals do not have enough financial, promotional and human resource support, so that's where we step in."

Pavlova said Harmony Club does not hire people, but rather supports their creative ideas financially and helps them work independently.

"We connect professionals with the end-consumer and other sponsors," she said.

Besides the Bicycle City Quest Championship, Harmony Club also organizes other activities such as

speed dating, singles parties, fortune-telling parties and courses in the psychology of relationships, Western etiquette and fashion.

Harmony Club only supports "crazy creative" ideas, something very new, unique or "never done before," Pavlova said.

Next Sunday, she and Trenti will organize another activity called Speed Dating on Wheels, where singles will ride Chinese rickshaws with other singles and fulfill tasks around Houhai.

Speed Dating on Wheels

Where: Houhai
When: June 5
Cost: 150 yuan (rickshaws included)
Email: vika.pavlova@gmail.com

Peloton Road

Bike Cycling Club

The largest pan-Asian expat road cycling group in Beijing provides you group Sunday rides in mountains around Beijing. They have groups for different levels and speeds, with each group containing 15 to 30 people. For more information, visit mongolaprocycling.com.

Where: TREK Store, Chaoyang Park, Chaoyang Gongyuan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Sundays, 9 am
Cost: free
Email: tomlanhove@gmail.com

Event

International bowling league summer session

Beijing's International Friendship Bowling League is starting its summer session. No matter whether you're alone or with friends, you can roll in and sign up for the league. The session ends before July, so you have plenty of time for summer sports.

Where: 2 F, 6 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 7:30-9:30 pm, Tuesday every week

Email: simonghall@hotmail.com
Cost: 100 yuan (includes three games, shoes and membership fees)

Swap your books and play board games

Imported books are costly, but at Sequoia, book lovers can get awesome new books for free by swapping already-read favorites. Sequoia has hundreds of titles, from non-fiction to thrillers, and the collection grows every month. A nice selection of board games also makes this a great setting for making new friends.

Where: Sequoia, Jianwai Diplomatic Compound, Chaoyang District

When: June 4, 2-6pm (first Saturday of every month)

Tel: 15811243464
Cost: free

Free dance class and party

Every Sunday evening, ballroom instructors Young and Bobo give a free dance class at Latinize Club. Classic Lindy Hop will be taught, along with East Coast swing and Charleston steps. After each class, there will be a dance party for participants to practice what they've learned.

Where: Latinize Club, Chaowai Soho, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30-8:30 pm, Sunday every week
Tel: 5900 2589
Cost: free

Night for singles

Still alone and looking for a date? Singles night provides plenty of opportunities to encounter Mr. or Ms. Right. Activities are arranged at Houhai or Sanlitun, where the beautiful scenery can make any date romantic. Men and women from different countries will attend, so it's a good place to meet new friends and relax on the weekends.

Where: Houhai or Sanlitun, to be decided

When: 2:30-5:30 pm, Saturday every week

Tel: 13910096626
Cost: 150 yuan (including fees for entrance and drinks)

(By Wei Xi)

Hutong carnival helps children understand traditional culture



Children exercising their creativity by painting traditional courtyard gate models

Photo provided by CHP

Last Sunday, Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (CHP) held a "hutong carnival" for children to celebrate International Children's Day.

The carnival aimed to raise children's awareness of traditional culture through various activities including painting traditional courtyards, models of gates and Old Beijing "grandpa rabbit" models and telling folk stories about Old Beijing. Accompanied by parents, children were given a cultural tour of the Guozhijian Hutong.

(By Xinji Letu)

Taxing foreigners in China

By Yao Weijie

The one-month comment solicitation period for the draft amendment of the much-debated Personal Income Tax Law ended on Monday, with a record 230,000 comments being left, according to the official website of the National People's Congress (NPC).

The amendment is set to raise the income tax exemption threshold for locals from 2,000 to 3,000 yuan per month.

The previous threshold was set under the 2008 Regulations for the Implementation of the Individual Income Tax Law. Currently, those who make less than 2,000 yuan per month are exempt from having to pay income tax.

But with rising living costs, people have argued that the threshold should be increased – possibly to even more than 3,000 yuan per month.

The minimum threshold for foreigners is currently 4,800 yuan.

To some analysts, the large difference in the threshold for locals and foreigners may have been a way to encourage foreigners to pursue careers in China.

"Considering foreigners' expenses on housing, transportation and other necessities, the government raised pre-tax deductions for them," said Sai Liu Huan, State Department counselor

and vice president of the Tax Institute at the Central University of Finance and Economics.

He said the difference in local and foreigner tax thresholds won't be the same in the short run. Currently, the baseline for European and American countries is higher than China, but the gap will narrow in the future.

Hu Dan, an employee from Singapore Airlines, said there used to be a policy that exempted foreign enterprises from paying income tax if they made a certain amount of profit, but the policy was terminated in 2007.

"Why is corporate income tax equally levied, whereas individual income tax is not equal for all?" Hu said.

On this matter, foreigners have differing opinions. Jacob Parker, assistant manager from Phillips Healthcare, said in America, individual income tax excludes housing, education, insurance and investments. If you have children, you get more tax relief. It's a complicated system.

China's tax code, on the other hand, is comparatively simple, ignoring people's expenditures and burdens.

"I was assigned to work in China, earning as much as I was back home, but should I pay more taxes than before?" Parker said.



Taxation Q&A

For those who are confused or curious about the tax policy, here are some potentially helpful answers.

What kind of person should be levied?

Five kinds of foreigners can benefit from the 4,800-yuan Income Tax Exemption:

- Those working in foreign investment enterprises and foreign companies in China.

- Foreign experts hired to work in Chinese enterprises, institutions, social organizations and government agencies.

- Individuals who live here and derive income from wages and salaries from overseas companies.

- Other circumstances as determined by the Ministry of Finance.

- Overseas Chinese and

Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan citizens.

Some foreigners get income from overseas, some get income from China. How is tax calculated?

Tax collection in China is divided into resident taxpayers and non-resident taxpayers. Generally speaking, if foreigners live in China for more than one year, they should pay taxes on the income received within and outside of the country, which means all of their income. But if they live in China for less than a year, they only need to be taxed from income within China. The minimum threshold for both situations is 4,800 yuan.

How is tax calculated if someone leaves China for part of the year?

According to the Chinese

tax system, foreigners living in China more than one year and going abroad for no more than 91 days a year – even if they're not in their home country – must pay income tax in China.

Is the tax policy the same in other cities in China?

National guidelines are set by the National Tax Administration, so in general the tax policy is the same everywhere. But wages and salaries are collected and managed by local tax departments, and there are many specific provisions. For example, the payment of tax concessions is different in different places; consequently, the individual income tax is different.

How do I avoid being double-taxed?

Double taxation, of course,

is possible. In the US, income is taxed regardless of where one lives. In accordance with Chinese laws, people who live here for more than one year also need to pay taxes.

Currently, China has agreements with more than 70 countries on how to avoid double taxation. Those who are really worried should make relevant plans before going abroad. They should file a tax return with tax certificate in China when they come back and pay the difference between the Chinese tax rate and the tax rate of their home country.

Keep in mind that many situations require specific analyses.

Where can I find additional help?

Call the Chinese tax hotline at 12366.

CFP Photo

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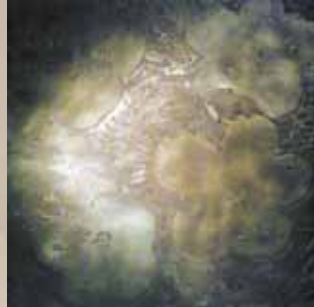
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DUST TO DUST

By He Jianwei
Dust invades every corner of life. Most of time, people hardly notice its presence. Occasionally it appears in a less benign form, like a sandstorm or cloud of volcanic ash.
It seems never to be a delightful material, but young artist Su Zhiguang collects it to use in his art.

Last Saturday, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) exhibited three of Su's works created from dust, which he sees as symbolic of the drifting nature of earthly life.



Dust, Insects, Dust Flowers



Dust Tiles

Dust Manual



Photos provided by UCCA

Asked to sum up his works, artist Su Zhiguang blurts out, "Dirty but beautiful."

"I never thought a beautiful work meant something clean. The concept of clean is something we picked up from the Chinese school," he said. "Art should have some vestige of the artist if a piece is too clean. Viewers won't be able to find the artist in it."

Su began collecting dust in 2009 by using his bicycle, a broom and plastic bags. During the last two years, he collected dust from the streets of Chaoyang District's Xiaoguan, Heping Jie and Heping Li. Each collection of dust was sealed off and labeled with the date and time of collection.

"People were curious what I was doing on the street, but I swept and left quickly to avoid questions," he said. "I used to be afraid of dust, but now I don't mind it."

Back home, he filtered the ashes to remove cigarette butts, hair and seed shells. "I only kept the dust because it was a drifting and ubiquitous material," he said. "Wind brings dust from one place to another, scattering these 'wanderers' from home into every possible corner."

Su sees a personal connection to his dust's journey. "Now far from my home, I look myself as like sand blown by the wind from one place to another in the city. I had a similar feeling while I was in my hometown, but I didn't know where it came from," he said.

Born in 1983 in Guangdong Province, Su lived in a small town for 20 years. His hometown has picturesque scenery with green mountains and water. He moved to Beijing in 2004 to study at the China Academy of Fine Arts. He has been in Beijing ever since.

In 2004, Su first came to Beijing and studied at the China Academy of Fine Arts. "The image of sandstorms lingered in my mind for a long time," he said. "I heard one of the biggest sandstorms was in 2002, but I wasn't here for it. I was actually let down that I didn't see a big sandstorm during my first year here."

The first big sandstorm he experienced came at midnight in 2009. After a quarrel with his girlfriend, he left and walked from Huajiaji, northeast of North Fourth Ring Road, to Heping Li, just outside North Second Ring Road. "At 3 a.m., Beijing had a big sandstorm. I gave up a complaint and feeling - I was annoyed but excited," he said. "Dust is something you can't live without. It's a part of life. I collected it to use in my art."

Su created some pieces using dust, but he had no opportunity to open a solo exhibition until leading contemporary artist Gu Wenda was invited to curate the exhibition of a young artist by the UCCA.

Drift: Su Zhiguang Solo Exhibition Curated by Gu Wenda

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Juxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
Time: June 3-10, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: 10 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 8459 9249

"The objects in his paintings, including the trees, flowers and insects, turn into dust in the end, as do human beings, dust to dust."

Gu had many choices, but he settled on Su's, recognizing it had something in common with his own work. Gu is famous for using materials like hair and blood to generate biological ink for his works.

Dust Manual, one of Su's works, is an imitation of *Manual of the Masters of Seid Gori*. Compiled in Qing Dynasty, the manual contains more than 400 examples of brushwork, ranging from the single stroke of a blade of grass and a flower petal to a tree, village or mountain.

The manual inspired and trained a generation of ink and wash painters, such as Qi Baishi, Pan Tanshou and Fu Baoshi, and became a classic text for students of traditional paintings.

Su imitates 46 of the sketches in *Dust*. On the original, each painting is followed by a short passage explaining the principles of painting - a detail which Su omitted. "I chose dust as my ink and let the text disappear to symbolize how this tradition is gradually dying out."

On the opposite wall hang seven pieces from *Dust Insects*, a series inspired by Andy Warhol's prints. Warhol's colorful flowers represent life and death and Su reinterprets the theme by adding dragonflies and crickets to his paintings.

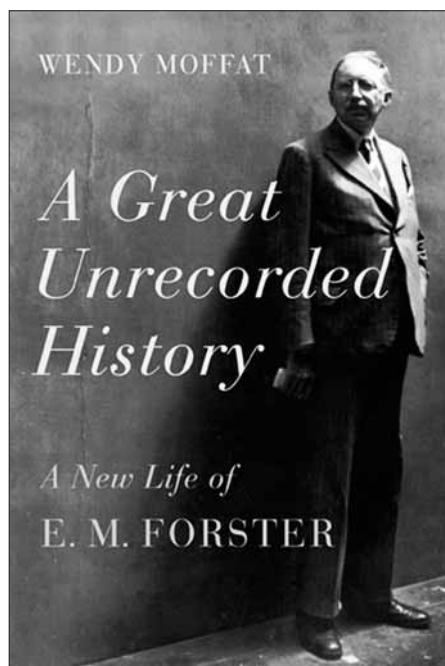
He sketched the flowers and insects first, and then brushed them with glue before blowing dust across the canvas. This piece is *Dust Tiles*, a collection of tiles caked in grime collected from 236 locations in Beijing. It is a tribute to his hometown.

Looking over Su's works, Gu was overcome with nostalgia. "Dust is the scent of Beijing," Gu said. "Watching an artwork is like reading a novel. You have different interpretations when you read it in your 20s, 40s and 50s. Su's experience shows his understanding of the work, and I have my own."

He compared Su's work with Marcel Duchamp's, created almost a century ago. Duchamp sealed a small glass with air in Paris as a souvenir, before he left Paris to New York. When he returned to New York, he gave the bottle to one of his friends as a gift.

In New York, a bottle of Parisian air was transformed into exotic art - something that symbolized nostalgia, drifting and loss," he said. "The objects in his paintings, including the trees, flowers and insects, turn into dust in the end, as do human beings. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," Gu said.

English writer's curious search for love unveiled



A Great Unrecorded History: A New Life of E. M. Forster
By Wendy Moffat, 432pp, Picador, \$20

By Charles Zhu

By the age of 32, British novelist E.M. Forster had already experienced "weariness of the only subject that I both can and may treat – the love of men for women and vice versa." It was a mysterious relationship that would puzzle him throughout his life.

Wendy Moffat, a biographer and teacher of English at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, tries to offer an answer in *A Great Unrecorded History*, an insightful, revelatory portrait of a sensitive and sensuous man who remains immensely influential.

In life, Forster was immensely successful, writing such great novels as *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910) and *A Passage to India* (1924). His narrative was clear and beautiful. He had faith in liberty, individualism and the sensuous life. He had an extraordinary gift for friendship.

His novels were devoted, as the critic Lionel Trilling noted, to the conflicts and drama between freedom and restriction, between the spiritual and the material, between England and its empire, and between one class and another.

But it was in death that his first truly personal novel appeared, Moffat writes.

Forster long resented having to hide an important side of himself in his novel *Maurice*, a story of homo-

sexuality that was published after his death in 1970. In life, he had deemed *Maurice* to be "unpublishable until his death and England's."

Moffat in her biography sheds new light on what she calls "the mystery of Morgan's strange broken-backed career," based on Forster's idiosyncratic diaries and letters to a wide community of friends, including T. E. Lawrence, D. H. Lawrence, Constantine Cavafy, Pete Townshend, Robert Mapplethorpe, Lincoln Kirstein and Gypsy Rose Lee. She also searched the files of noted sex researcher Alfred Kinsey.

Forster was born in 1879. His father died soon after his birth, and he was instead brought up by his hard-pressed and demanding mother, with whom he lived until her death in 1945. Moffat recounts his uncomfortable relationship with his mother. "Lily came by her obtuse optimism honestly, and it later served her well," Moffat writes. The tract about which his mother was most obtuse was Forster's sexual orientation. "I wish he were more manly and did not cry so easily," she once said of her only son.

Moffat traces Forster's attitudes about sex and hypocrisy and places him in the light of his changing times. He was first infatuated with Italian culture. He traveled to Italy with his mother and did not experience real freedom until World

War I, when he went to Alexandria, Egypt, with the Red Cross. It was in Alexandria that Forster achieved the breakthrough that he called "parting with Respectability" at the ripe old age of 37.

Forster's peculiar relationship with the younger, admiring T. E. Lawrence served to warm his heart and to try his patience. His longtime intimacy with Bob Buckingham, a married policeman, gave him the feeling he had hoped for as he wrote *Maurice*. He met Bob in 1930 and the affair continued, perhaps even intensified, after Buckingham's marriage with May. Moffat writes about Forster's relationship to May with real tenderness: "Between them, Morgan and May deftly carved out an intimate space for their respective 'marriages' to their beloved Bob, with the long weekends for May and the short weekends for Morgan."

But at the age of 84, he looked back angrily on a lifetime spent in hiding. "How annoyed I am with Society for wasting my time by making homosexuality criminal," he wrote. "The subterfuges, the self-consciousness that might have been avoided."

Forster was a man to love and be loved.

His twilight years were spent with Bob and May Buckingham, who looked after him on his death bed.

Identity lost in a foreign land

By Wei Xi

In Chinese history, the Western Xia Dynasty refers to the kingdom of the Tangut ethnic group. Their kingdom, which lasted from 1038-1227, was overthrown by Mongol invaders in the early 13th century.

The people of Western Xia fled south, where they lived as new comers lost in a gap between two cultures. With the death of their last king, Western Xia vanished from history.

Another group of people is facing the fate of the Tanguts in the modern day: the men and women born on the Chinese mainland in the early 20th century who fled to Taiwan after the civil war.

Known as "outcomers" to the local Taiwanese, they like the Tanguts have lost their identity in a new land.

In Luo Yijun's new book, *Western Xia and Hotel*, he links the ultimate fates of these two migrations. The book tells the stories of people living at different historical periods who share a rise to prominence

and a fade into memory.

It is a novel about wounds and redemption, and separation and pursuit. It mingles illusion and reality.

Unlike traditional novels, it does not follow a strict timeline to tell complete stories. In fact, the novel is pretty much like a beehive, divided into various cells, and each contains an independent but incomplete story, said Luo at One Way Street Bookstore.

Luo said he used the image of "hotel" because it is a place where different people's stories connect.

Born in an outcomer family, Luo lived an almost "isolated" life in a small town called Yonghe.

"My father fled to Taiwan along with the Kuomintang in his 20s, and since then he lost contact with his parents and former friends" Luo said.

The experience made Luo's childhood quite different from that of the native Taiwanese children.

"I did not have a complex social net-

work like native kids did" he said. "In my family there was only my father, my mother and I."

And because he lived like a mainlander at home and was taught like a Taiwanese at school, he was constantly in the throes of culture shock.

"The outcomer Taiwanese are just like the Tangut people," he said. "The natives have their own complete dreams, but the outcomers are stuck living local people's dreams."

Luo said the stories were not all based on his own experiences, but rather experiences of other Taiwanese outcomers.

"Luo is a person who cannot distinguish himself from the others," said Zhang Yueran, Luo's friend and a famous mainland novelist. "He always takes others' stories as his own."

"*Western Xia and Hotel* is the summation of those whom Luo wants to become, and those Luo wants to experience," Zhang said.

Luo began writing his book in 2005



Western Xia and Hotel
By Luo Yijun, 888pp, Guangxi Normal University Press, 78 yuan

completed it in 2009. However, its origins reach back to 1995, when Luo traveled to the mausoleum of Li Yuanhao, first king of the Tanguts.

The writing process was fraught with melancholy.

Trends Lounge book listing



Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of books about international art, design and architecture.

500 Cabinets: A Showcase of Design & Craftsmanship

By Ray Hemachandra and John Grew Sheridan, 420pp, Lark Crafts, \$24.95

From a closed hut and bedside table to cupboards, curios and a waterfall chest of drawers, these 500 outstanding contemporary cabinets showcase the art and craft of fine furniture making. These newly made

works celebrate shape, joinery, detailing and color, or the subtle combination of all those qualities.

Air / Luft: Unity of Art and Science

By Oliver Herwig and Axel Thallermer, 336pp, Arnoldsche Verlagsanstalt, \$85

The book addresses the question of what air is and approaches answering it from two angles. First, through a scientific explanation of its chemical and physical elements, their



properties and the effect they have on our immediate environment. In parallel, air is traced as a phenomenon dealt with in art, architecture and design.

Handmade Shoes for Men

By Lazlo Vass and magda Molnar, 216pp, hf ULLMANN, \$24.99

Special essays provide insights into the history of shoe fashion and the shoemaking craft. Excellent color photographs illustrate each stage in the making of these works of art in leather.

(By He Jianwei)



Buyers' shops define city's fashion future

By Chu Meng

Buyers' shops first appeared on the mainland in 1999, when prominent Hong Kong fashion retailer I.T. Group opened its first store in Shanghai.

In the more than 10 years since, fashion buyers have grown from an extreme minority to a trendy group bent on bringing avant-garde fashion labels from around the globe to the mainland, and Beijing is one of the core battlegrounds in this mission.

Their shops can be split into two categories according to their fashion offerings: one is independent buyers, like PUFF, which sell selections from Japanese brands and those working with American- and European-style shopping malls like Land Crawford.

At 28, Tiffa Mao is one of Beijing's first independent buyers. She opened the avant-garde store PUFF in Jianwai SOHO in 2006.

PUFF sells clothing and accessories by Japanese brands. It is a 15-square-meter space, decorated in Mao's favorite black-and-white leopard stripes, that houses fashion curiosities like the 2011 cross-border designed Converse shoes by Rei Kawakubo and Tsumori Chisato's limited edition women shirts.

Hundreds of products, by both Japanese design masters like Junya Watanabe and Jun Takahashi and new brands like BAPY and BAPE Shark, hang together inside.

"A buyer's tastes decide the soul of his or her store, and all the stores together offer a sample of a city's current taste in fashion. These can only exist when a city has grown to develop an elevated appreciation for fashion," Mao said.

Mao describes herself as having an innate sense of fashion. She bought her first pair of earrings at the age of 5 and soon became fascinated with the woolen Japanese coats and one-piece French dresses in her mother's closet.

"I could watch my mom sew and knit a sweater for hours. No one taught her what to do – her designs came from instinct. She used to sketch out her own templates on old newspaper using chalk," she said.

Having inherited her mother's

talent, Mao began collecting fashion pieces that met her tastes in the sharp, sensitive and unusual.

She kept collecting for 15 years until her house could hold no more: that was when Mao, then a 23-year-old fresh graduate of Beijing Foreign Studies University, decided to open PUFF.

But PUFF was an unexpected success. Her stockpiles were quickly snapped up by local buyers, many of whom returned as repeat customers.

"Some pieces from marginal Japanese brands sold for five times their initial cost, and the requests just kept coming in. That was when I decided to teach myself to become a full-time buyer with a focus on Japanese products," she said.

Buyers were unheard of five years ago, and few knew the difference between a buyer's store and a common vendor's.

"A buyer is a person who caters to individuals with a distinctive sense of style, bringing them new brands that are not readily available locally. A buyer's store is something like a mecca for those with a sharp eye for fashion," Mao said.

Driven by her mission, Mao dedicated herself to bringing Japanese mainstream and marginal brands to local customers who were willing to experiment.

"A successful buyer has to be energetic, open-minded, sensitive to new things and able to appreciate how fashion is part of a modern lifestyle," she said – though her success with Chinese customers may have more to do with her own aesthetic sense.

China's fashion industry is still low on the learning curve, Mao said. A real fashion

atmosphere is only just beginning to form.

But the country needs talented buyers if it hopes to push on to developing the "fashion of the future," she said. And those buyers have to be willing to stand out against current fads.

"As a Japanese product buyer, you have to form your own style and keep it. Then you need to educate your customers about why you have chosen your products. Never lower yourself to being a procurement agent – a buying machine that picks up whatever is ordered on a Taobao shop," she said.

Beijing's independent buyer scene didn't take off till around 2004, five years later than Shanghai. The financial crisis that shook American and European markets in 2007 made the number of Chinese fashion and luxury shoppers surge.

During the past three years, Beijing's fashion atmosphere has experienced a rebirth with a flood of new independent buyers. Most focus on Japanese styles, since both Japanese and Chinese customers have similar figures and skin tones.

Mao's PUFF sells the Japanese Daikanyama street style, which consists of high quality designers' products, sophisticated layers and mix-and-match. She travels to Japan every two months to search for new products by master and nameless designers.

"But I'm still waiting for more recognition from local buyers," she said. Despite the explosion, the fashion market remains a niche.



Tiffa Mao is one of Beijing's first independent buyers. She opened her avant-garde store PUFF at Jianwai SOHO in 2006.

Photos provided by Tiffa Mao



Fashion products designed by Rei Kawakubo and Tsumori Chisato can be found at PUFF.

Mao's Top 5 Japanese brands

1, A.P.C.: This ready-to-wear French brand was founded in 1988. It has good reputation among Japanese fashion connoisseurs for its minimalist looks composed of clean lines, simple patterns and invisible logos. Its clothing tends to incorporate military characteristics. One of the brand's most popular products is its raw-denim selvedge jeans.

2, Head Porter: Seen as a Japanese national treasure, this Harajuku-based Japanese fashion label was created in association with designer Hiroshi Fujiwara. It focuses on a wide array of Japan urban style bags and is well known for engaging in high-profile collaborative projects with other fashion labels and bag designers.

3, Fred Perry: Born in the late 1940s, Fred Perry was the first British brand to successfully blend sportswear with streetwear to create some of the most iconic styles of the last century. Its designs cling to the brand's ethos of authenticity, integrity and attitude.

4, Candy Stripper: This high-end expensive punk brand for women produces sophisticated but cute designs. It is the darling of Japanese fashion magazines.

5, Graniph: The brand sells exclusive graphic T-shirts at reasonable prices. An average T-shirt costs about 200 yuan. It releases as many as 100 new designs every month, and as many as 130 during the summer months. Its product line-up also includes bags and caps.

Established designer launches online store



Backpack T-shirt, 196 yuan

By Ammie Wei

Zhang Na, a young Beijing woman who established her apparel brand (Na) too in Shanghai in April 2008, launched another line, Fakenatoo, on Taobao last month.

The timing was right for an online brand, Zhang said.

(Na) too was only available at upscale department stores in Shanghai and Beijing, or special boutique stores like B.N.C. (Brand New China at Sanlitun Village North). "Online brands try to build a closer connection between itself and customers," Zhang said.

Offline brands are also limited by location and department store policies.

"Buying online is a trend," Zhang said. "Customers don't need to visit Beijing or Shanghai to buy my clothes."

She said she has gotten orders from second- and third-tier cities in addition to Beijing and Shanghai.

Zhang has noticed an emerging market for online brands. "People who buy online have started to upgrade from buying inexpensive products to buying quality and unique products," she said.

She believes that there will be even more online buyers interested in quality products.

Fakenatoo, open for a month, carries works by three designers, including Zhang, and plans to release 70 to 80 products each season.

This season, the online boutique has several themes. One is "traveling alone" – a backpack T-shirt (198 yuan) comes in white or blue; the back of the T-shirt contains a pickpocket-detering design.

New arrivals also have vintage designs, such as a black dress with a small cape in the back (526 yuan), which works well for the office or formal events.

Selling clothes online and offline are two different things. Compared to (Na) too, Fakenatoo offers more casual styles at friendly prices.

Although Zhang's online and offline brands are totally separate, her designs share the same belief that people make the clothes; clothes do not make a person.

A customer truly feels a design only when he or she has put on a piece of (Na) too or Fakenatoo clothing. That keeps customers coming back.

In June, Zhang Na began a re-design project. She collected used or vintage clothing from friends and turned them into something new. She was invited to show her work at Austrian Fashion Week later this month.

After the fashion week, the re-design project will carry on, Zhang said. Products will go to Brandnū, a charity store that helps women from remote areas.

"To turn used clothes into new ones is more complicated than simply making a new one," Zhang said. "But for many people, it's an interesting thing."

Website: fakenatoo.taobao.com



Designer Zhang Na

Top with hood, 386 yuan

Black outfit, 296 yuan

Pants, 466 yuan

Dress, 586 yuan
Photos provided
by Zhang Na

One-piece,
to be determined

Chinese-run American diner still going strong



Shrimp quesadilla, 45 yuan



Lily's burger, 40 yuan



Inside Lily's restaurant Photos by Scott Wang

By Scott Wang

With the opening of Subway Line 10, the neighborhood communities at Shuangjing have embraced commercial enterprises and restaurants.

Lily's, a Tex-Mex restaurant, is one example of a successful venture in the area.

The classic dish is the cheeseburger (35 yuan) – a large portion of freshly grilled beef with lettuce, tomatoes, onions and pickles on homemade bread.

The most popular burger, though, is the Lily's burger (40 yuan), the recipe of which is rumored to have come from a generous Canadian couple who are regular customers. The fresh creamy coleslaw plus grilled beef, bacon and cheese has always been a hit.

The Mexican part of the menu includes burritos, quesadilla, tacos, nachos and fajitas, all of which can be made with chicken or beef. The new shrimp quesadilla (45 yuan) with cheese is just perfect for the summer. The burritos (35 to 45 yuan for beans and rice, chicken or beef) are fresh, flavorful and spicy, tightly wrapped and not at all soggy. Spaghetti with meatballs (35 yuan) and pizzas (starting from 30 yuan) are also good and very much in the American style.

The small eatery also offers an all-day breakfast, with pancakes, French toast and omelets. Desserts are displayed in a case at the door.

Lily, a small-town girl from Anhui Province, came to Beijing four years ago with 300 yuan in her pocket to seek opportunities the big city might offer. After three years as a waitress, she and her boyfriend, Joe, established their own restaurant.

After a year and a half of operation, Lily's expanded its drink selection to include cream soda (12 yuan), which is hard to find in Beijing.

Sometimes it's hard to believe this restaurant is run by a young Chinese couple that has never lived abroad. The daily specials reflect the owner's insistence on authenticity: items such as chili served with chips and garlic bread drip of Americana.

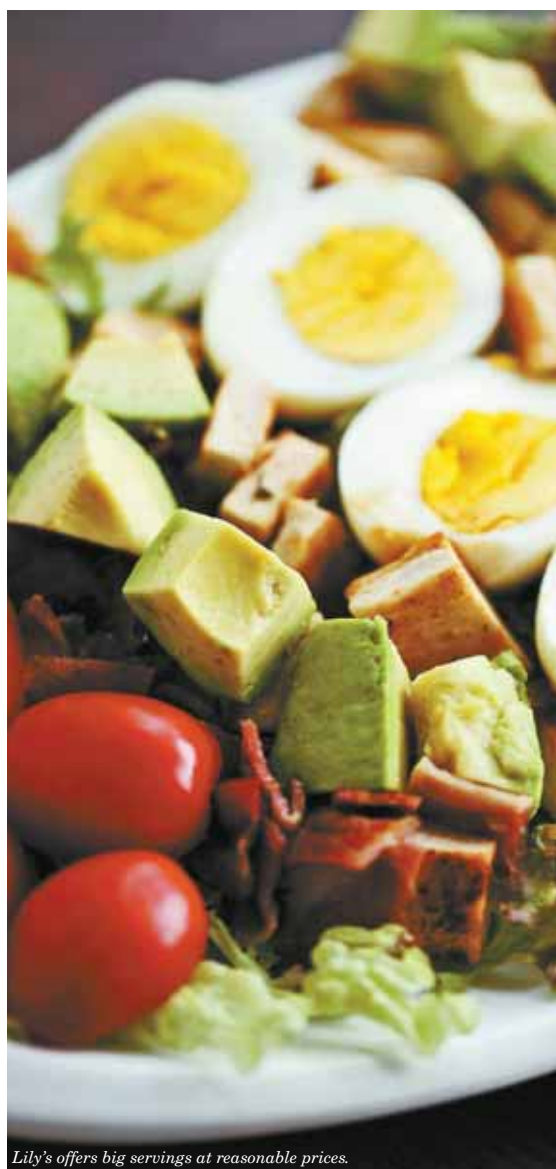
The service is welcoming and prices are all reasonable. Free delivery is offered within the Shuangjing area.

Lily's

Where: Unit 2-18, Building 2, Tianzhi Jiaozi, 31 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 8 am – midnight

Tel: 6592 5548

Cost: Starting from 35 yuan per person



Lily's offers big servings at reasonable prices.

The wonderful world of whisky

By Wei Xi

Because of its unique taste and history, whisky has become one of the most popular drinks around the world. There are many ways to enjoy whisky: neat, on the rocks, with mixers or as part of cocktails. But few people truly understand this age-old spirit.

Whisky, or "uisge beatha" (as it's called in Gaelic), was probably first produced in Ireland and Scotland around 900 years ago. Whiskies can be roughly separated into three categories: single malt, grain and blended.

Single malts are made only from barley, yeast and water, and have complex flavors, while grains are pure and mild, since they are made from several grains such as corn, wheat, or rye. Blended whisky is a mix of malt and grain spirit, with malt content usually between 30 and 50 percentage.

There are a multitude of distilleries and blended whisky brands in Scotland, but for people in China, Chivas is the most well known, since it is one of the first brands to have been introduced into the Chinese market.

Harold Broese, who runs the Beijing-



Chinese consumers like whisky for its smooth and unique taste.

CFP Photo

based boutique import and distribution company XIX Spirit, said that whisky has been a popular drink in China for about 10 years, but people's drinking habits are rapidly developing.

People interested can find quality whiskies at places like Ichikura, Alba Cafe and Aria Bar and Restaurant.

Bruichladdich 16-year-old First Growth (600 yuan)

The Bruichladdich 16-year-old First Growth is an exceptional whisky, produced on the island of Islay, off the west coast of Scotland. It is first matured in American Bourbon Casks, then matured a second time in high-quality wine casks

from Bordeaux, which used to hold Chateau Lafite wine.

The Lafite cask imparts a pinkish tinge to the whisky and has a marked effect on the smell, taste and finish of the drink. The final effect is fantastic – very smooth with a finish that is slightly dry.

Compass Box – Hedonism (650 yuan)

This is a blend of very high-quality grain whisky, matured between 14 and 29 years in the very best oak casks. It is a unique product, as typically grain whisky is never brought to market on its own. In this case, the result is a rich and smooth whisky with sweet vanilla flavors. This was twice awarded the world's best grain whisky!

Lastly – Lagavulin 16-year-old

Lagavulin is currently not available in China. It is a key ingredient in the Johnny Walker blend, and so is only bottled as a single malt in small quantities. The company that owns Lagavulin has not allocated any stock to the Chinese market. It's a strong, smoky whisky, but well balanced and not at all one-dimensional like some other Islay malts such as Ardbeg.

A fairyland to scream at

By He Jianwei

At first glance, Wang Zun's oil paintings look like pictures that could appear in a book of fairytales, with their colorful and simplified strokes depicting woods, grasslands and mountains.

But at second glance, Wang's fairyland reveals itself as full of melancholia and anxiety. His characters are reminiscent of ones in Nor-

wegian painter Edvard Munch's, whose most famous work, *The Scream*, represents the anxiety modern man.

A graduate of the Oil Painting Technique and Creation Studio of Hubei Academy of Fine Arts with a Master's degree in 2005, Wang's works show the influence of European oil masters.

In one of his early works, *Cross*, a woman

is naked and wears a gloomy look, reminding viewers of Munch's *Madonna*, a painting of the Virgin Mary. While Munch alluded to the crisis of belief caused by the development of modern industry and technology in the late of 19th century, Wang aims to consider money worship in modern China.

Belgian contemporary artist Luc Tuymans is another of Wang's mentors. Tuymans builds the atmosphere of the familiar, distant, quiet and deserted in his paintings. These influences can be found in Wang's works, such as *City's Plaza* and *100 Percent Early Youth*.

Besides the influence of European oil painters, Wang uses ideas from ancient Chinese poetry.

The moon and red-crowned crane appear in Wang's paintings again and again. The moon is an eternal theme in poetry, representing poets' noble spirit. "From my readings, the red-crowned crane is a vehicle between the earthly and the paradisiacal," Wang said. In his fairyland, the two elements definitely exist.

On June 4, Wang's solo exhibition will begin at New Millennium Gallery. Titled *Unwarranted Fairyland*, it displays two themes from his recent works: mankind suffering the future consequences of industrial civilization, such as divers who search for means of survival; and immortals floating in a solitary paradise.

Unwarranted Fairyland - Wang Zun's Solo Exhibition

Where: New Millennium Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: June 4 - 30, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6432 4122



5 Friday, June 3

Movie Hannah and Her Sisters (1986)

This Woody Allen movie of life, love and sadness tells intertwined stories of an extended family between two Thanksgiving dinners.

Where: Room 2407, Building 2, Renmin University of China, 59 Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: free
Tel: 15210961610

Nightlife Buyi Band

As one of the best folk rock bands in China, Buyi, from Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, brings with it impressions of western China.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie,

Dongcheng District
When: 9 pm
Admission: 40 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door
Tel: 6401 5269

Exhibition Full On - Not Vital Solo Exhibition

This exhibition shows portrait paintings of Swiss artist Not Vital, inspired by his life in the art district Caochangdi, where he established his studio.

The portraits include people he has met, including his tai chi teacher, neighboring artists and assistants.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until July 10, daily except Monday, 10 am - 7 pm
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 8459 9269

7 Sunday, June 5

Movie I Love Beijing (2000)

Divorced taxi driver Dezi meets a girl named Xiao-xue, dates her and then dumps her. After failing in his courtship of the beautiful librarian Miaomiao, he learns that Xiao-xue has killed herself.

Where: UCCA, 798 Art District, No. 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District, Beijing
When: 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 8459 9269

Nightlife Rush Hour - Also a Mosh Night IV

Seven local bands - A-Z, It Never Happened, Multi-Ego, Great a Day, Return the Truth, The Reason and Unregenerate Blood - will rock the night.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 50 yuan advance purchase, 60 yuan at the door

6 Saturday, June 4

Nightlife Pet Conspiracy Album Release Show

Pet Conspiracy will release its long-awaited first full-length album this Saturday with a live show that will feature an alchemical synthesis of sounds, lights and creepy puppets.

Where: Star Live, 3/F Tango, 79 Hepingli Xi Jie, Dongcheng District
When: 10:30 pm
Admission: 80 yuan advance purchase, 100 yuan at the door
Tel: 6402 5080

Movie Metropia (2009)



Tel: 6402 5080
**Exhibition
Mr. Curiosity - Dai Chao Solo Exhibition**



Dai Chao depicts a beautiful and intriguing world using

This Swedish animated science fiction film paints a disturbing picture of the year 2024, when human beings have run out of resources on Earth.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 4 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8001

Exhibition Monologue - Guo Jian Solo Exhibition

This exhibition presents about 20 extraordinary paintings from *A Sickness Called Missing to Polaroid* series. Guo, sensitive and sentimental, reveals the secret lives of those born in the 1980s.

Where: Asia Art Center, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, 798 Art District, Chaoyang District

When: Until July 5, daily except Monday, 10:30 am - 6:30 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9709

colors loaded with emotion. His style grasps what he takes to be the essence of natural scenery and his memories, so that viewers cannot help but want to probe the artwork.

Where: Mizuma and One Gallery, 241-15 Caochangdi Village, Guigezhuang, Chaoyang District

When: Until July 3, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: free
Tel: 5127 3267

(By Xinji Letu)

Upcoming

Nightlife

Christophe Lier Trio

French jazz pianist Christophe Lier will perform his compositions accompanied by bassist Da Zhong and French drummer Nicolas Meges.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: June 9, 9 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6401 5269

Stage in July

Concert

Chen Sa Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 8, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-400 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Dresden Philharmonic Children's Choir

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: July 12, 7:30 pm
Admission: 30-100 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

King's College Choir

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-400 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Lorin Maazel and Castleton Festival Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 29-30, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-680 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Grand Ballet of Montreal

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 20-21, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

On the Road

Where: Nine Theater (TNT), Chaoyang Culture Center, 12 Jintai Li, Chaoyang District

When: July 5-10, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-500 yuan, 50 yuan for students
Tel: 6551 6930

Some Kind of Poison

Where: Multi-functional Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 20-29, 7:30 pm
Admission: 200-680 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Opera

Purcell's Dido and Aeneas

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: July 15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 20-100 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

(By He Jianwei)

Thyroid could be cause of long-term malaise

By Li Zhixin

Thyroid hormones, produced by the butterfly-shaped gland in your neck, regulate the body's metabolism and temperature and the functions of the heart, brain, muscles and other vital organs.

But recent years have seen a sharp rise in thyroid troubles. According to the Chinese Medical Association, the incidence of thyroid trouble has risen to 18.6 percent from 5 percent in 2001. Thyroid cancer is now the sixth most common form of malignant cancer.

Women hit hardest

Zhou Xiaoli, a 38-year-old journalist, was complaining of sluggishness, indigestion and irregular menstruation for more than two years before she found the cause of her illness.

After several different hospitals failed to diagnose her problem, a colleague suggested she seek help from a doctor of traditional medicine.

The doctors at Beijing Guangji Chinese Medicine Hospital (GCMH) asked her about her lifestyle, dietary habits and previous medical results, and then checked her tongue and pulse.

Her tongue was red with no coating and her pulse was thin and rapid — signs of a severe yin deficiency.

The doctor attributed her troubles to a thyroid disorder and prescribed her a series of acupuncture treatments and herbal formulas, as well as recommended she change her diet.

After a third treatment, Zhou began seeing her symptoms lessen.

Thyroid disorders occur in three major forms: thyroid nodule development, hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism.

Thyroid nodules are usually painless, and patients may not realize they are developing since there are no early signs. When a nodule develops, it may appear as a lump on the neck or a nagging cough. Sufferers may have a hoarse voice, swollen neck veins and trouble breathing and swallowing. In rare cases a nodule may be cancerous.

Hyperthyroidism is a condition in which the thyroid gland is overactive and produces too much thyroid hormone. Typical symptoms of hyperthyroidism include a fast heartbeat, high blood pressure, moist skin, excessive perspiration, tremors, nervousness, a heightened appetite with weight loss, diarrhea or frequent bowel movements, weakness, aversion to heat, eyes that seem to bulge out of their sockets and light sensitivity.

Hypothyroidism is a condition in which the thyroid gland is under-active and produces too little thyroid hormone. Typical symptoms of hypothyroidism include a hoarse voice, ringing in the ears, slowed speech, puffy face, drooping eyelids, sleepiness, an aversion to cold, constipation, weakness of the lower back and knees, weight gain, impotence, irregular menstruation, dry hair and skin, a white, sticky tongue coating, poor memory and depression.

It is important to note that these thyroid diseases are different from the dominant one of earlier times: goiter. Goiter, a disease caused by iodine-deficiency, often produced a large mass in the neck area. The condition has become very rare since the world began using iodized salt.

Xing Xiying, the doctor in the hospital's Thyroid Department, said middle-aged women are most likely to develop thyroid troubles. Women are four times more likely than men to suffer hyperthyroid, eight times more likely to suffer hypothyroidism and about twice as likely as men to develop thyroid tumors.

Traditional perspective

In Chinese medicine, all thyroid problems are seen as stemming from an imbalance of yin and yang energies.

Yin is dark, moist, receptive, female, sinking and carrying a negative electric charge, while yang is light, fiery, active, male, outward-expanding and carrying a positive electrical charge. Keeping these two forces in harmony is the basic goal of traditional medicine.

The interventions used in traditional medicine include acupuncture, herbal formulations and dietary therapy.

"When yin is in deficiency, our body can't control the yang energy from escaping outward and upward, and the overactive movement of yang brings about the characteristic symptoms of hyperthyroidism, while when yang is deficient, the body can't produce the vital energy necessary to keep the body functioning well and symptoms of hypothyroidism appear," Xing said.

Treatment of thyroid disorders

But masses and nodules are different. These are seen as balls of entangled qi, phlegm and static blood.

Traditional doctors turn to phlegm-dispelling such as pinellia (*banxia*), runella (*xiakucao*), fritillaria (*beimu*), sinapis (*baijiezi*), dioscorea bulbifera (*huangyaozi*) and various citrus fruits and vegetables like tangerine peels, red oranges and bitter oranges.

Hyperthyroidism is thought to start with an excess of bodily fire that later develops into yin-deficiency fire. Therefore, doctors use fire-purging herbs like raw rehmannia (*dihuang*), dioscorea (*shanyao*), prunella (*xiakucao*), peony (*moutan*), gardenia (*zhizihua*), scrophularia (*yuanshen*) and cornus (*shanzhuyu*) to treat the early stages of the disease.

Depending on the specific yin-deficiency pattern, Liuwei Dihuang Wan is commonly used for kidney yin tonic, Zhizi Qinggan Tang is used for liver cleansing and Tianwang Buxindan is for heart yin tonic.

Hypothyroidism is thought to start with a yang deficiency. Cinnamon and aconite (*wutou*) are common herbs for treating yang deficiency.

Depending on the specific yang-deficiency pattern, Jingui Shenqi Wan is the leading herbal formula for treating the kidney yang tonic, while Yougui Wan is widely used for heart yang tonic.

Foods for thyroid health

There are certain foods that can also help boost thyroid health:

1. Seaweed and shellfish

Naturally rich in iodine and trace minerals, seaweed and shellfish have long been considered foods that help the thyroid. Iodine is critical to thyroid health and function. Without adequate dietary iodine, your body is unable to manufacture thyroid hormone.

However, an excess of iodine-rich foods is also implicated in thyroid disease. Moderation is the key.

2. Coconut oil

Coconut oil also supports proper thyroid function as it slightly stimulates thyroid hormone production and helps the metabolism. Consuming small amounts of coconut oil is thought to support thyroid health and help sufferers of hypothyroidism lose weight.

Coconut oil may also help reduce cholesterol in hypothyroid patients as thyroid suppression in and of itself raises blood cholesterol levels. Coconut oil is largely comprised of saturated fat which promotes thyroid function.

3. Uncooked fruits and vegetables

Introduce uncooked fruits and vegetables to your diet. They can help lower your cholesterol, combat indigestion, stabilize blood sugar levels, stop headaches and joint pain and help you shed a few pounds.

But go easy on vegetables and fruits like broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale, spinach, turnips, soybeans, peaches and pears, which are all considered capable of holding back the development of thyroid hormones.



Cole flowers blooming in the suburbs

By Zhang Dongya

If you missed the cole flowers blooming in southern China in March, just head to Changgou, a suburb of Beijing, to view this splendid sight.

When cole flowers bloom, fields are transformed into seas of gold. In Changgou, rivers and lakes add to the scene, so feel free to spread a blanket next to the water and have a barbecue.



Photo by Gu Xueli



Photography lovers will have a lot of fun in the cole fields.

A flowery view

Changgou Town in Fangshan District is located in southwest Beijing. With two rivers cutting across – Nanquan (south spring) and Beiquan (north spring) – the town is dubbed the “water country of south Beijing.”

The famous cole flowers are most associated with Wuyuan, Jiangxi Province and Luoping, Yunnan Province, where they blossom in February and March, but Beijing’s cole flowers are equally impressive. They are currently blossoming and will continue to do so until mid-June. If you miss your opportunity to see it now, you’ll have to head to Menyuan, Qinghai Province in July.

There are more than 130 hectares of cole in Changgou, the largest area in Beijing. Locals said the area used to be a wasteland until they planted crops and turned the place into a lovely spot.

Scarecrows and run-down tractors add to the scenery. Many cou-

ples also choose this location to take wedding photos.

On the opening day of the cole flower festival last weekend, visitors flew colorful kites while local singers performed and people played guitars in the fields.

There is also a large field of cole flowers in Shidu in Fangshan District. Water lilies and rice paddies are there as well. Every July, a large area of lotuses and water lilies blossom around Longquan Lake.

In Sanzuo'an Village, or the Village of Three Nunneries, villagers grow flax and millet in the terraced fields. The small sky-blue flowers of flax will blossom in July or August, providing a sight rarely seen in the north: a mountain of blue.

After the cole harvest, villagers will plant sunflowers in the fields. These will peak in September and October. This year villagers will also plant pink and purple sunflowers. Visitors in the fall can also pick dates and pears.

Continued on page 21...



A large field of cole flowers are blooming this month in Changgou, attracting many city dwellers with its promise of beautiful scenery.

Photos by Wang Miemie



Photo by Ji Yonghui

...continued from page 20

Changgou Cole Field

Where: Changgou Town, Fangshan District

Getting there: Take Bus 917 to Changgou Jianchazhan (15 yuan). You will see the cole flower field in the west. It takes about an hour and a half to get there. Or drive along Beijing-Shijiazhuang Expressway and take Liulihe exit. Passing Hancunhe you will reach Fangyi Lu, turn left and drive in the Yixian direction for 500 meters. The cole flower field is on the west. Round-trip toll fee is 20 yuan.

Admission: 20 yuan; 10 yuan for groups of more than 10

Tel: 6136 6131

Notes: There is a free parking lot beside the cole field

Accommodation

Visitors are recommended to stay overnight in Changgou Town.

Taoyuangou Mountain Villa

This is a large reception center located in Beizheng Village in Changgou with all facilities. Standard rooms cost 130 yuan.

Tel: 6133 2076

Other attractions

River path

There is a small path in Dongganchi Village in Changgou Town on which one can view typical water scenery. The path twists and turns, just like the river. There are bridges, small ponds, rice fields and small wooded areas. Sometimes you can catch the sight of water fowl. At dusk, you can see villagers or outside visitors angling at the riverbank. Some villagers still keep the old custom of using river water to wash clothing.

Small spring

There are many small springs in Changgou. Some spring mouths are quite small, forming bubbles on the land. It is said that springs maintain a constant temperature of 18 C. Villagers drink directly from the springs when they get thirsty.

Wanquan Lake

Wanquan Lake, located in Dongganchi Village, is a large tranquil lake with several islands dotted in the water, on which grow trees. Visitors can boat on the lake.

A relaxing way to spend the afternoon is pitching a tent next to the lake. Pipa Island is a good destination for camping. It has flat grassland and improved facilities like a parking lot and grills available for barbecuing.

Cost for boating: 80 yuan per hour for wooden boat, 40 yuan per hour for pedal boat

Tel: 6136 6131

Recommended itinerary

After viewing the cole field, visitors can get on a battery-powered vehicle that operates daily from the town to other destinations.

There are two routes:

Itinerary 1: From Pipa Island to Cole Theme Park. It takes about 30 minutes and costs 5 yuan.

Itinerary 2: From Pipa Island to Fangshan World Geological Park Museum. It takes about 50 minutes and costs 10 yuan, with part of the drive along the shore of Longquan Lake.

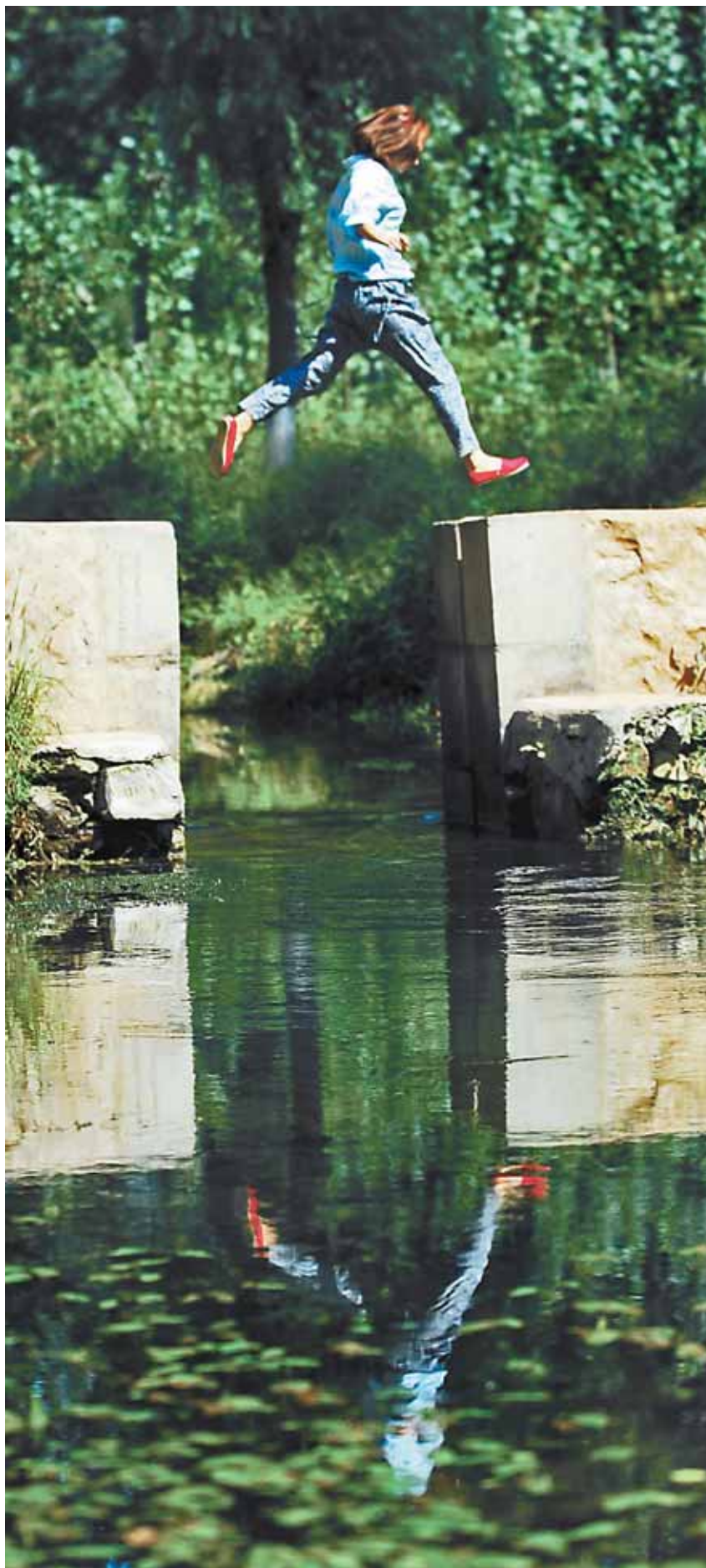
The museum, opened last year, is the largest geological park museum in the country. Inside, visitors can learn about the geological changes around Beijing. Five rock pillars in different colors represent the five geological eras as related to the city.

As a branch of the Geological Museum of China, the exhibits in the main museum will also be showed in Fangshan World Geological Park Museum in the future.



Changgou Town is dubbed the "water country of south Beijing" because of its river and lakes.

Photos by Wei Yao



Dining



Kids eat free at lunch buffet

Children under the age of 12 can eat free at The Regent's ever popular lunch buffet. There is a great selection of child-friendly food creations for your little ones to enjoy.

Where: The Regent Beijing, 99 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District

Cost: 188 yuan Summer Lunch Buffet (15 percent gratuity), add 50 yuan for soft drinks, juices and free local beer. Children under 12 years eat free. Tel: 8522 1789

Countdown to Centro's going away party

After seven years of non-stop 24-hour operations, 2011 marks a special occasion in Centro's history. The award-winning bar and lounge at Shangri-La's Kerry Center Hotel, Beijing will close for renovations from June 12 through the end of August.

To commemorate the milestone, a three-day

event will be organized from June 9 to 11 to build-up to "Centro's Going Away Party" on the evening of June 11. To add to the vacation theme, Centro's staff will be decked out in sailor suits, while caricature artists and the in-house jazz band, Tabitha King, entertain.

The night of June 11 will showcase electronic beats from a Singaporean guest DJ. Guests who love creative cocktails can participate in the "My Cocktail, I Decide" auction, for the exclusive naming rights of five specially designed cocktails, which will be on the new beverage menu of Centro after it re-opens.

All proceeds from the auction will be donated to the Children's Hope Family, one of the hotels' championed charity organizations, under the Shangri-La Group's Embrace; Care for People Program. The party atmosphere will continue into the wee hours of the morning.

Where: Shangri-La's Kerry Center Hotel, Beijing, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

When: June 9-11. Invitation only between 7-10 pm on June 11, open to public after 10 pm
Tel: 8565 2398

Zongzi! Dragon Boat Festival at Sunworld Dynasty Hotel

The Dragon Boat Festival is the best time of the year for these fascinating dumpling creations. Come and indulge in the sumptuous seafood buffet extravaganza and enjoy various zongzi at this wonderful dinner at Dynasty Plaza. You will never forget our dishes once you've tasted them.

Where: Sunworld Dynasty Hotel, 50 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: June 2-6, 6-10pm
Cost: 298 yuan per person
Tel: 5816 8888 ext. 8298

Hotel

Shangri-La gets Forbes accolade in list of Annual Star Awards 2011

Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing has received a four-star certification in the Forbes Travel Guide Annual Star Awards 2011. The list names the best of the hospitality industry and is one of the most respected and revered rating and certification systems due to its objective and trustworthy assessment.

For more than 50 years, consumers have referred to Forbes Travel Guide to determine their accommodation, dining and leisure needs. Forbes Travel Guide provides one of the most comprehensive evaluation systems for hotels, restaurants and spas in the world and only the best quality properties with consistent travel experiences receive the accolade.

Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing is one of seven hotels in Beijing to receive the award. The Forbes Travel Guide rating process is based on more than 750 standardized criteria for hotels, making it one of the most rigorous and comprehensive evaluations in the industry.

"We are honored to be recognized with a Forbes four-star rating for the fourth consecutive year. It is truly rewarding to be recognized by Forbes Travel Guide, and is a testament to the commitment of Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing in providing only the highest levels of service and facilities to our guests," said Christopher Chia, general manager of Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing.

Regent welcomes Azerbaijani official

George Benney, managing director of The Regent Beijing, welcomed Abulfas Garayev, minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, during his stay at the hotel.

The Regent Beijing is centrally located in the heart of the business district and cultural center of the city. This 500-room hotel offers an exclusive

sanctuary that blends contemporary style with the charm of historic China.

With an interior designed by Hirsch Bedner Associates, the hotel offers excellent accommodations and a choice of award-winning restaurants and bars. Selected rooms enjoy panoramic view of the Forbidden City.

The Regent Beijing is within walking distance of landmark shopping and tourist destinations such as Wangfujing, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City.



Holiday Inn Beijing Focus Square named China's Best New Hotel

Holiday Inn Beijing Focus Square, the newest and tallest international mid-scale hotel at Wangjing's famous business hub, was recognized as The Best New Opening Hotel in China Hospitality at a recent awards ceremony. This prize was awarded by Hotel Gold Champion Selection Committee, Hotel Culture Industry Summit Forum Organizing Committee, Global Hotel Travel Website Special Produce and Federation Internationale du Tourisme Honor Certificate.

The hotel is the best choice for discerning busi-

ness travelers, meeting delegations and those who enjoy the exclusivity of club facilities with a dedicated team offering efficient and friendly service.

New General Manager at Grand Millennium Beijing

Gino Tan was appointed general manager of Grand Millennium Beijing on April 25.

Tan, a Singapore citizen by birth, is a graduate of the University of London with a BSc in Economics (Hons), a member of the Cornell General Manager alumni and a key member of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce in China. His global path has instilled an unparalleled open mind and great sensitivity to the countries he has worked in. Tan is fluent in English, Chinese, Malay and several Chinese dialects.

Tan brings with him a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the hospitality industry. With his strong leadership, vision and knowledge of hotels, the Grand Millennium Beijing hopes to become the city's top Five-Star hotel. The hotel is committed to providing exceptional customer service and an outstanding guest experience at its most envied location in the central business district.

Summer weekend promotions at Grand Millennium Beijing

Book now and get a superior room starting from 888 yuan or a deluxe room starting from 988 yuan. The offer is valid through July 31 with a minimum required stay of two consecutive nights on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

Bookings include complimentary daily buffet breakfast, but are not eligible for airline mileage credit or group bookings. Reservations are subject to availability.

Where: Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 8587 6888 ext. 5888, call for reservations
Email: reservations@grandmillenniumbeijing.com

(By Jackie Zhang)

Event



Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) launches Chinese website

The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), the UK's national museum of art and design, launched a Chinese version of its website (vamuseum.cn) in May, particularly tailored for the Chinese market.

Via this website, Chinese users can receive updates on V&A's latest happenings and experience the museum online.

The website is aiming to better cater to the needs and interests of its growing audience in China. Related research has been carried out to learn how Chinese people were using the V&A's existing site and which features they were most interested in.

V&A also launched an official micro blog (weibo.com/vamuseum). The blog will also host interactive lucky draws with exclusive gifts from the V&A shop.

V&A has held several exhibitions in Beijing and Shanghai. More upcoming exhibitions will be held from 2012.

(By Zhang Dongya)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Li Zhixin at lizhixin@ynet.com.

Everything is but floating clouds



By Xinji Letu

Last Saturday, my foreign friend Eric came to my apartment and told me that he just broke up with his girlfriend. I was very sorry to hear that because he had been dating this girl for nearly two years.

"We never had a fight," Eric said. "She was a great girl. We did everything together — movies, concerts, sporting events, restaurants. I just don't get why she ultimately chose a middle-aged guy over me."

"She chose a middle-aged man over you?" I was greatly surprised given the fact that Eric is a good-looking 23-year-old.

I have seen his ex-girlfriend several times — a well-mannered young lady. I thought the two were perfectly made for each other: Eric is young and energetic, and she is graceful and pretty. Apparently Eric thought that way too.

"Can you believe she did this, after

all I've done for her?" Eric said angrily. He then began listing all his good deeds: buying her expensive clothes, paying her bills, standing in the rain for hours in front of her company's building to make sure he was the first person she saw after work, talking to her for hours even though all he had to say was, "Really?" and "I'm sorry."

As he continued to ramble, I lost my patience. Although I understand breaking up with someone is a miserable experience, listening to someone whine about it might be even worse.

"Anyway," I interrupted, "you know what's past is past. Everything is but floating clouds!"

"Floating clouds? What's wrong with floating clouds?" Eric was confused.

I immediately realized my mistake. Although some popular phrases are widely accepted among Chinese youth, they often

do not make any sense in English.

To the more than 100 million Chinese netizens, "Everything is but floating clouds" is instantly recognizable. It was one of the most popular phrases on the Internet last year, expressing feelings of frustration. It's a way to tell someone not to take things too seriously, for they are of little consequence — just as clouds that come and go.

Foreigners, however, would need profound knowledge of Chinese pop culture and modern lingo to grasp such meanings. But the more you learn, the more you realize how creative Chinese netizens can be.

I explained to Eric what the phrase means, and he seemed to understand. He thought it was a funny expression and a perfect fit for his situation. He even stopped whining.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

1. The rich prefer art and travel spending to status.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZSD): Here we are confronted with a perennial question: whether it is "the rich prefer" or "the rich prefers"? The rich is a collective noun. It should be plural, not singular, that is to say. It should be: The rich prefer art and travel spending to status. So, the rich, the poor, the oppressed, etc., should all be regarded as plural.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): The reverse of using "the rich" (a collective) as a plural is using "their" with a singular. For example: The list of books includes their reason for being banned. Or: Students should take their application form to the university office before Thursday. Of course, we could use the plural "reasons" and "forms," but sometimes it is clearer to keep the noun in the singular form and have the plural meaning intuitively understood by the reader.

2. Trivia sparkles in the river of memory.

ZSD: Here involves again the question of plural or singular. "Trivia" is a noun that is fairly perplexing. You may think that it is singular. But that's wrong. "Trivia" is originally a Latin word and is plural. Its singular form is *trivium*. The adjective form is *trivial*. So, the sample sentence should be: Trivia sparkle in the river of memory.

TBZ: This strikes me as a poetic sentence that can still be understood even though it is technically grammatically incorrect. However, it is interesting "trivia" that we seldom or never speak of "trivium" in the singular form. Why would that be, do you think? Can we only talk about one piece of trivia? It is a difficult question to answer!

3. Designated drivers

ZSD: This is a fairly new term in English. I cannot find the entry even in the World Book Dictionary. A designated driver is one who is forbidden to drink alcohol at a party and is held responsible to drive others home after the party is over. The other day, we had a news story about the local government trying to recruit volunteers to drive cars home when the proper driver is found to have taken liquor. I think this is not entirely in compliance with the original meaning of the word. In this case, I think "valet driving" is better. I found the usage while I was in the US, where there are valets who drive cars to the parking lot for the client and, when the client wishes to go home, they are held responsible to take the car from the parking lot and drive it to where the client designates, preferably the gate.

TBZ: As far as I know, a designated driver is a person in your group of friends who volunteers (or pulls the short straw) to refrain from drinking for the evening and drive you all home.

We only have unfamiliar designated drivers in big cities on important holidays, such as Christmas and New Year's, and I believe you have to arrange with them in advance — there are many more drunks than drivers. Some taxi drivers also volunteer their time on those evenings. For valet parking, the hotel or restaurant valet is responsible only for driving between the hotel or restaurant door and the parking space (either in a parking lot or on the street), saving you the search for a parking space and the hike from the parking space to the restaurant door. You can arrive to the party fresh. Better yet is having your own chauffeur. You have to be pretty fancy in Canada to have your own chauffeur, but it is pretty common in China among the expats. In the past, foreigners weren't allowed to drive in China and now, though it is allowed, many people choose not to. Me, I'm all about public transport, which I find is cheap, easy and convenient in Beijing, though it could run a bit later in the evening. 10 or 11 pm is a bit early for a city that no longer sleeps.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to lizhixin@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Glasses shop

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

This sign reminds me of another sign I saw in Nanjing while I was studying Chinese there. It was outside a hair salon and read, in Chinese characters, "Sanxing" (or "three stars"). I said to my roommate, an overseas Chinese girl from Thailand, "Three stars? Who would want to get their haircut there?"

"Why? What's wrong with it?" she asked. Her Chinese is much better than mine and, to her, the sign made perfect sense. She told me, "Three Stars means Samsung in Chinese."

"Oh!" I replied. "It might mean Samsung in Chinese, but in English it means 'yiban' or 'so so' — OK but not great. Like a three-star hotel. Who would delib-



erately go there to get a 'so-so' haircut?"

I was making a joke, of course, and this sign reminds me of the same thing. Who would go, especially using their

hard-earned money, to buy a pair of "Common People" glasses? If a person has to wear glasses, as I do, my first choice is contacts.

Second choice would be glasses that make me look fabulous and glamorous, like the goddess I am. I would go to a store that has *bai* (hundreds, all kinds of) *xing* (shapes — except "shapes" is written differently — this one means "name, family name") *yan-jing* (glasses).

However, if you add a *lao* (old) in front of *baixing*, it then means "common people" — therefore it ends up as Common People Glasses. Their slogan is something like: Stay with the herd! The first bird gets shot!



“Life goes on, for better or worse.”

Life in shuffle

By He Jianwei

Named after the moment the Wenchuan Earthquake struck – 2:28 pm on May 12, 2008 – Du Haibin's 1428 captures how the survivors have fought to rebuild their lives.

It was awarded the Orizzonti Prize for best documentary at the 66th Venice Film Festival in 2009 for its “sincere and human-oriented” approach.

People continue their life in the aftermath

Du focuses on the town of Beichuan, one of the worst-hit areas, where he and his crew visited twice: three days and seven months after the quake.

Each visit lasted one month.

The crew arrived at the stricken area on May 14, when rescuers were still searching for survivors within the golden 72 hours, after which the chance of survival falls off dramatically. But the crew did not want to follow the rescue stories that most media were covering.

The film begins 10 days after the quake, showing how lives had been destroyed or uprooted.

People who had lost everything picked up scrap metals from the ruins to sell for pennies. When the bulldozers toppled dilapidated buildings, people rushed into the ruins with hammers and saws to steal all the metal.

In the early days, people turned to robbing each other for supplies. One man interviewed in the film said his house had been looted and after he reported it to the police, he learned the robber was one of his acquaintances. “It left me with very complicated feelings. I didn't know how to deal with him: both of us are victims,” the man said.

Although the golden hours passed, survivors did not give up the search for their

missing relatives. As the crew covered the chaos in a middle school dorm, they met a family seeking their youngest son.

The parents and older brother looked over each room and located the remains to determine which bedroom he lived in. The mother found the son's clothes on the floor and the father turned the pages of a book on the bed to see the name of his son.

In that moment, they knew their son was gone. They cried for a while before packing up his clothes to take away as mementos.

That was the only sentimental scene the director kept in the film. Most of the scenes are about the survivors' attempts to recover what they have lost.

One family in the mountainous area had expected to have a bright future: their second son was about to become a father; they were building a new house; they had won a contract to plant kiwi fruits.

Disaster brought their dreams crashing down.

The son and his pregnant wife died in the quake. The kiwi seedlings were smashed by a landslide. The only way to survive was to sell off the family's pigs at a disgracefully low price.

“When a big disaster happens, there are too many important things to film. We focused on the individuals to see how they

lived when they had nothing,” Liu Aiguo, the photographer, said at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art Sunday afternoon. “The film is not the rubbings of earthquake history. It only provides the viewers with an impression of humanity.”

Liu still hears the screams of pigs when they trod on a pile of broken glass. As the butchers drove some pigs to a slaughterhouse, the pigs walked along the wall to shun away from the butchers but ended up stepping on the glass.

“The pile of glass was a danger that was right in front of them. The first pig's scream sounded like the cry the people let out the moment the quake happened,” he said.

The quake also challenged people's opinions. One victim said, “I realized that when I have money, I have to spend it. If you die, it is meaningless how much is in your account.”

It also made many people question their spiritual beliefs. When a Taoist temple was damaged in the quake, one elder asked the priest where the Earth God

was and why he didn't save the people.

“Not many people gave money to build the temple or came to worship the god,” the priest said.

One mentally ill man appears several times throughout the film. Dressed in shabby clothing, he ambles about the streets, watching people who were collecting scrapes, bargaining and living in the shelters. The director chose to focus on him to show his life had remained unchanged amid the chaos.



The life of a mentally ill man (left) goes unchanged amid the chaos.



The quake smashed many people's dreams in a moment.

Photos provided by UCCA